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THE PEARL OF INDIA

BY

MATURIN M. BALLOU

From India and the Golden Chersonese,
And utmost Indian Isle Taprobanes.
MILTON

SECOND EDITION



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
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PREFACE.

THAT many readers evince a growing satisfaction in contemplating foreign lands through the eyes of experienced travelers, the favor shown to previous books by the author of these pages abundantly testifies. Mutual profit is therefore the outcome of such a work; both the author and reader are gratified.

It is a pleasure to depict scenes which have afforded so much gratification to the writer, for enjoyment is redoubled by being shared, — “joy was born a twin.” The undersigned has often been asked both personally and by letter, “Of all the places you have seen and written about, which do you consider of the most interest, and which do you recommend me to visit?” This is a very difficult question to answer, because individual tastes differ so widely. It is safe to say no point presents more varied attractions to the observant traveler, more thoroughly and picturesquely exhibits equatorial life, or addresses itself more directly to the delicate appreciation of the artist, botanist,

antiquarian, general scientist, and sportsman, than does Ceylon, gem of the Orient. There are few attractive places in the East which are so accessible, or which may be said to offer more reasonable assurance of safety and good health to the stranger, than this fabled isle of Arabian story. The climate is equable and most delightful; though the temperature is exceptionally high, it is, in fact, perpetual summer, varied only by the rains of the monsoon months of May and June, October and November. The tropical heat near the coast is trying to northern visitors, but one can always find a refuge, within a day's journey, up in the hills of the central province, where it is so cool at most seasons of the year as to render a fire necessary after sunset. In the matter of expense, this route is as economical as the average of land and sea travel in any direction. The cost of living in Ceylon is quite as moderate as in Southern Europe, and now that the island is so generally traversed by railways and excellent government roads, there is very little hardship to be encountered in visiting its remotest districts.

M. M. B.



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THE PEARL OF INDIA.

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AFTER a pleasant sojourn in China and Japan, with Ceylon as his objective point, the author came westward by way of the Malacca Straits, crossing the Indian Ocean on a line of about the eighth degree of north latitude. It is a lonely expanse of water, in traversing which plenty of time was found for meditation. The equatorial rains, though brief, were at times so profuse during the voyage as to suggest the possibility of a second universal flood, and also the advantage which might accrue from being web-footed ; but the air was mostly soft and balmy, the nights were gloriously serene and bright. The transparency of the atmosphere magnified to dazzling proportions the constellations which looked down so serenely upon us, while the moon seemed to have taken a

position vastly nearer to the earth than is its wont at the north. The phosphorescent waves tossed glowing gems, like fire-opals, about the ship's hull, while setting our long wake ablaze with flashing light, and producing a Milky Way as luminous as that above in the blue ether. All phosphorescent matter requires friction to infuse it with light, and so the thoroughly impregnated waters were churned into liquid fire by our vigorous and swift-revolving propeller. What millions upon millions of animalcules, and these again multiplied, must contribute to produce this aquatic illumination. During the day, large turtles, schools of dolphins, flying-fish, occasional water snakes, together with whole shoals of jelly-fish, were encountered on the widespread tropical sea. At times, myriads of the fairy-like nautilus floated past in gossamer frames, while in savage contrast, voracious man-eating sharks followed the ship close upon either quarter, in eager watchfulness for human prey. How terribly significant is the upright dorsal fin of this creature, seen just above the surface of the water, indicating the hideous, slate-colored body which glides swiftly and stealthily below!

Hovering over and about the tall masts upon untiring pinions, a score of white-winged, graceful marine birds persistently kept us company day after day. They joined the ship off the coast of Sumatra, as we left the entrance to the Malacca Straits, introducing themselves at first with noisy vehemence and

piercing cries, as if to assert their presence and purpose, a proceeding which was not again repeated. What became of these handsome feathered creatures at night we never knew, and it was found that the oldest seaman was equally ignorant. If they slept upon the waves, they must have overtaken us with arrowy swiftness at the break of day. They were undoubtedly able to do this, as they outstripped us in speed at any moment when they chose to do so, sailing through the air far ahead and all around the rapid, steady-going ship. However early one came on deck, they were sure to be in sight, glancing hither and thither upon the invisible air currents without any apparent exertion. It was the very poetry of motion. We came finally to look upon these tireless fellow travelers with no small degree of interest, and should really have regretted their absence. It is always a pleasing diversion to watch them, to count and see that their full number is still present, and to delight in their free and graceful movements.

During the period of their presumed nightly rest upon the heaving bosom of the sea, our vessel must necessarily pass over a distance of many leagues, far, far beyond the power of human sight. How marvelous, therefore, must be the instinct which guides them unerringly to resume our company with the earliest rays of the morning light. When, in the arid desert, the exhausted camel sinks at last in its tracks to die, and is finally left by the rest of the

caravan, no other object is visible in the widespread expanse, even down to the very verge of the horizon. Scarcely is the poor creature unloaded, however, and left to perish upon the sand, before there will appear in the far-away sky a cloud of vultures, at first mere specks in the blue atmosphere, swooping with lightning speed towards the dying animal, whose bones they immediately strip with terrific voraciousness. One who has witnessed this scene can never forget it. The vultures strain and tear at the carcass, swallowing great pieces of hide and flesh, until at last, when they are completely gorged, they can only rise a few feet from the earth, to sink again exhausted upon their feet. Hours must transpire before they can again soar any distance upon the wing, after their gluttonous repast.

The sea in this region of the Indian Ocean teems with animal life, the curiously shaped finny tribe often exhibiting colors as gay and vivid as those of the birds and flowers in the low latitudes.

Some strange and puzzling phenomena of nature were occasionally witnessed. Now and again the whole ship's company were deluded by a mirage; we seemed to be approaching land, though it was never reached, and at the moment when we should fairly make out its bearings, it faded slowly into thin air. So realistic were these appearances, often repeated, that some passengers were curious enough to consult the captain's sailing-charts to see if certain

islands or shoals were not laid down in or near the course we were steering. The nights were the most enjoyable, so full of a delicious sense of repose, the stillness broken only by the great heart-beats of the huge engine which formed our motive power. The soft and refulgent atmosphere invited one to linger on deck rather than to seek the close confinement of a stateroom below, and thus many hours were passed in a half-dreaming, half-conscious condition, while reviewing the varied experiences of the past few months of travel. Tableaux of Japanese life and scenery, bewitchingly attractive and enjoyable adventures in tea-houses, gay excursions in jinrikishas, together with unique temples and huge statues of Shinto deities, passed in endless procession before the mind's eye. The oddities and the local color in Shanghai, Hongkong, and Canton; the soothing motion of palanquins; the sloping-eyed, yellow complexioned and pig-tailed people of China; a devastating cyclone encountered in the Yellow Sea, and the wondrous sunset which followed it; the gyrating waterspout which was seen off the Gulf of Siam, a not infrequent experience where so many active currents of wind and water meet; the many living pictures well-remembered of the islands of the Malay Archipelago engraven upon the brain at Singapore, Borneo, Sumatra, Penang, and Java, the latter containing more active and extinct volcanoes than any other known region,—all these seemed very real, though only silently rehearsed in dreamland.



Soon after leaving the straits and gaining the broad ocean, a brief but heavy gale of wind was encountered, which created for some hours a most boisterous sea. On the morning after the storm, a foremast hand was sent over the starboard bow to make fast some gearing which had become loosened by the gale. Almost immediately afterward, the cry of "Man overboard!" rang fore and aft the ship. A wide-awake passenger who happened to be standing near the taffrail instantly took a knife from his pocket, and cutting loose a life-buoy which was fastened to the starboard quarter ratline, promptly threw it towards the man in the water as he floated away from the ship. The sailor saw it, and being a good swimmer struck out for and reached it. A moment later, it was seen that he had succeeded in thrusting his head and arms through the opening of the sustaining buoy. In the mean time, the captain at the sound of the ominous cry sprang up the ladder leading to the bridge, and took personal charge of the ship, sending the first officer, whose watch it happened to be, to superintend the lowering of a quarter-boat to rescue the unfortunate seaman if possible. There was no flurry, no confusion among the crew. Not a word was spoken except by the officers. The silence of discipline was supreme. A sailor was promptly ordered into the shrouds to keep run of the man, who was soon out of sight from the deck, so rough was the intervening water. The quarter-boat

was lowered from the davits, and was afloat in less than three minutes after the order was issued, with six stout seamen at the oars and the first officer in the stern. What a mere cockle-shell it appeared in that angry sea, one moment low down in the trough, and the next upon the summit of the waves towering above the deck of the ship. Nothing of less importance than the saving of a human life would have warranted the launching of a boat in such a wild condition of the waves. The sailor who had been sent into the shrouds was ordered to point constantly toward the man in the water, so that those in the boat might know in what direction to steer.

“Give way, men, give way with a will!” said the officer, and the oars bent to the muscular power of the crew.

The ship had been under a twelve-knot headway when the accident happened, and the man, supported by the buoy, was already a mile or more to leeward. Then occurred a singular and inopportune circumstance, which was for a moment the cause of dangerous delay. The sturdy seaman who pulled the stroke oar of the boat just launched was seen to falter, cease rowing, and suddenly to bend forward, as though he were paralyzed. The excitement of the moment completely unmanned him. His heart for an instant ceased to beat. The first officer comprehended the situation instantly. Seamen are trained to promptness; so off came his coat, the tiller was

thrust into the half-fainting sailor's hand, accompanied by a brief command, — he could steer if he could not pull, — and the officer bent his own stout arms and body to the stroke oar. There was no time for words, — the stake was a human life. One or two of the anxious passengers whispered the word "Shark!" Where were those tiger-fish at this critical moment? The boat made slow but steady headway towards the distant seaman, while he at the tiller steered as was indicated by the man stationed high up in the ship's shrouds. Upon reaching the bridge and relieving the officer on duty, the captain, while issuing his other orders, had coolly rung down to the engine-room, — "Stand by! Slow down! Stop her! Back her!" with a brief interval between each signal. Then, stepping to the starboard end of the bridge, he waved his handkerchief to the fast disappearing seaman to let him know that his commander was at his post and would do his best to save him. The big hull, in response to her reversed propeller, after a few moments of tremulous indecision, began to move stern foremost. Several passengers ascended the rigging to keep the boat in view, for it too was lost to sight from the deck. It struggled stoutly with the angry sea, which seemed loath to give up its victim. Those in the shrouds gazed eagerly, and almost held their breath. The steamer drew very slowly nearer to the man in the water, as well as to the boat. By and by, after a period of terrible suspense, the man in the

water was seen to be seized by his messmates and drawn into the boat, which was then turned toward the ship. It was a long and severe struggle still, to contend successfully with the high sea which was running, but the boat was finally brought on the lee side of the vessel, the stout ropes were made fast to the ring-bolts in its stem and stern, and with all on board it was quickly run up to the davits. The rescued man and his brave deliverers were received on board with three hearty cheers, and the big ship, once more under a full head of steam, took her course westward.

Prompt action, cool courage, and good seamanship saved the life of the imperiled sailor. There was more than one grateful heart on board which was relieved by a silent prayer of thanksgiving.

Some of our lady passengers complained of being seriously annoyed by sea-dust, which at first thought seems ridiculous. Dust at sea! But there is nevertheless an impalpable collection of salt matter or dry spray, so to speak, which rises at times from the ocean, especially in these latitudes, causing the eyes to smart, and giving a distinct saline flavor to the lips, while it is so penetrating as to thoroughly impregnate one's clothing. When the sun shines, this deposit seems to be less abundant, but like the dew, it affects those most who are exposed to the night air. The "dust" of the sea is very real, as any experienced sailor will testify.

Our voyage was not without several eventful oc-

currences. On the second day after the storm, the lookout reported some object ahead lying almost directly in our course. At first it looked like a huge whale, the dark body well out of water, or like the top of a sunken rock; but as we rapidly approached, it was made out to be the hull of a large ship, keel uppermost. It might have proved to be a fatal encounter, had we run upon it in the night. A sharp lookout, together with the sun shining upon the object, revealed it, but being so near the color of the sea and having no top-hamper in sight, it could not have been discovered at any considerable distance at night. Probably half-sunken vessels have been ere this the cause of other and equally fatal wrecks. The size and character of the one we had encountered could only be surmised. The name, even, could not be made out. It appeared to be a sailing craft of eighteen hundred or two thousand tons, which had "turned turtle," as sailors term it, perhaps in the storm which we had so lately encountered. The air retained in the hull when it capsized evidently served to keep it afloat. Our steamer was stopped within a safe distance, and a boat was lowered and sent in charge of an officer to examine the hull, with orders to cut a hole in the bottom. This would naturally cause the very dangerous obstruction to sink. It was slow work to cut an opening in the stout bottom with an axe, but when it was finally accomplished and an aperture two feet square was made, the downward

pressure of the huge structure forced out the air and water with tremendous power, like a monster whale spouting. It was now plain enough what had kept the hull afloat, for as this confined air rushed out, producing a noise like escaping steam, the dark mass began slowly to settle, so that before our boat had returned and was fairly secured at the davits, it had sunk below the surface of the waves, which washed over it for a few moments, as though it were a coral reef. Then it suddenly disappeared altogether. These treacherous seas have been well named the graveyard of commerce. The mystery of the wreck, so far as we know, was never solved. Doubtless all hands perished together when the vessel capsized.

Of course, such an experience sets one to speculating upon the possibilities which it involves. Sometimes a terrible sense of loneliness comes over the voyager upon the ocean, notwithstanding the ship and its immediate surroundings, when he realizes the immense space covered by the wilderness of the sea. It is not so much fear as it is awe inspiring.

The passengers watched the captain with great interest daily, as he went through the formula of recording the ship's course. Any incident at sea is eagerly seized upon to vary the monotony. As is well known, the commander of a ship corrects his time by the observation of the sun at meridian, thus specifying his position upon the waste of waters, and enabling him to mark upon the chart his exact lati-

tude and longitude. The process is a mystery to the average traveler, but its simplicity will delight him, if he once takes the trouble to understand it.

It was a bright December morning when we made the island of Ceylon. Not a cloud was seen breaking the intense atmospheric blue that overhung the vast expanse. Many of the passengers, on retiring the night previous, left word with the steward to be called at an early hour in anticipation of our sighting the land. The sea had been quite calm for the last two days, and the nights sublime. A few of us found it sufficiently restful to remain on deck amid such surroundings, gazing idly among the clustering stars, so far away, and watching for the first view of the shore. Thus the night passed, and the big red globe of the sun came up out of the sea to the eastward, as though it had been sleeping submerged there since it bade us good-night in the west at twilight. Adam's Peak, in the shape of a perfect cone, had been in view from the deck since the break of day, half lost in the far-away sky. In clear weather, this famous elevation can be seen sixty miles off the shore of the island. The height of the mountain, and its looming form, at first produces the effect of a mountain rising abruptly from out of the perfect level of the waves, but we were now rapidly approaching the land, and just as the steward's bell summoned us to breakfast, the lighthouse on the end of the breakwater of Colombo came dimly into view. The first

meal of the day, usually partaken of at sea with such hearty zest, was neglected by most of the passengers that morning. A welcome and absorbing sight was before us. We had last been on land at Penang, which was now left thirteen hundred miles astern. All were weary of the sea, and in a favorable mood to fully enjoy the gentle land breeze which came to us laden with the fragrance of flowers distilled from a wilderness of bloom. Tropical luxuriance and languor reigned supreme. What a summer world it was, beautiful beyond expression! The sunshine had not yet asserted its oppressive power, and the island was seen at its best. An artistic eye could not but delight in the lavish display of well-defined color which was presented in the azure sky, the deep green of the vegetation, the pale blue of the shoal water, and the snow-white feathery spray combing over the stout granite coping of the breakwater. As we came nearer to the influence of the shore, the air was tintured with rank odors, and the water was heavy with yellow seaweed, while the hoarse murmurs of the contentious waves sounded their mournful anthem. No matter how calm the outer sea may be, the large green rollers of the ocean break with great force when they meet with any abrupt impediment on the shore. One does not readily forget such an impressive moment. It remains a joy forever.

It is curious how sensitive the judgment is to external influences. Nothing is more likely to produce a

fixed and unfavorable impression of a new place than to approach it beneath a cheerless, cloud-darkened sky, while bored by some personal annoyance. On the contrary, if one is introduced to a fresh locality under cheerful auspices, while Nature herself is in a happy mood, he unconsciously reflects a similar spirit, and is heartily prepossessed in its favor. It was only necessary to observe one's companions to see this fully illustrated. There were a few disaffected ones to whom the world seemed all awry, but the majority felt the inspiration and joyousness of the scene.

It was now clear enough that Adam's Peak ("Mount of the Holy Foot"), which had seemed a short time since to rise abruptly from the very bottom of the sea, was really situated far inland, dominating a whole family of lesser elevations, and having many miles of low, thick-wooded country lying between it and the ocean. As we rounded the lighthouse, half a dozen European steamships came into view, riding at their moorings, making a brief call here on their way east or west, together with a considerable fleet of small coasting crafts, and a long line of idle catamarans, drawn up upon the shelving beach. Besides these, there were a couple of full-rigged European sailing ships, presenting a strong contrast to the mammoth steamers with their invisible motive power. One of the ships was getting under weigh, bound for Australia. A number of her busy crew were aloft, engaged in setting sail after sail, and covering the

ample yards with canvas wings, while the capstan bars were manned by others getting up the anchor, their hearty and melodious nautical refrain coming clearly to our ears across the intervening waters.

No sooner had our ship come to anchor than it was surrounded by a score and more of curious native boats, which are called on this coast catamarans (*katter maran*, "tied tree"). The true catamaran is to be seen all along the east coast of India, consisting of three or four trunks of trees bound together with thongs. These contrivances form the rude floats which are used by the Coromandel fishermen, and hence the name. A few of the boatmen who were permitted to come on board vociferously importuned the new-comers for a job, or pressed great bargains upon us in the shape of fresh fruit, Brummagem stones, curiously ornamented boxes of shells, and toy carvings in ivory and ebony, the latter mostly representing elephants and Chinese idols. Altogether there was a perfect babel of tongues adding to the confusion incident upon the landing of passengers and baggage. There was much handshaking, while many hasty but hearty farewells were spoken, for it must be remembered that the good ship, after leaving a few of the cabin passengers safely on shore and taking on board a supply of coals, would continue her voyage toward far-away England.

The queerly constructed boats to which we have referred consist of a rudely dug-out tree trunk, fifteen

or twenty feet long, having planks of wood fastened to the sides lengthwise, to form gunwales and afford some protection from the water. No nails are used in their construction, the woodwork being securely lashed — we might say sewed — together with Ceylon cordage, made from the fibrous bark of the palm. An outrigger, consisting of a solid log of wood, is fastened alongside six or eight feet away, by means of two arched poles of stout, well-seasoned bamboo. The outrigger, which is about half the length of the boat, prevents the possibility of overturning it, but without this attachment so narrow a craft — less than twenty-four inches in width — would not remain in an upright position, if occupied, even in a perfectly calm sea. The outrigger is always kept to windward, and as these canoes have both ends constructed alike, they sail equally well either way. The mast and single sail, being portable, are easily shifted from one end to the other, or adjusted to suit. The similarity of these rude boats to those one sees throughout the Eastern Archipelago shows us whence the idea was probably borrowed. Some of the larger canoes are over forty feet in length, but none are wide enough for two persons to sit abreast in them.

In these apparently frail floats the natives go fearlessly twenty miles to sea in almost any weather short of a gale, to catch deep-water fish, and it is a very rare occurrence to hear of any serious mishap befalling a catamaran, or its hardy navigators. A

European, upon finding himself in one of these "floating scarecrows," according to the remark of a fellow passenger after reaching the shore, "feels as if he were recklessly tempting Providence; and though he may not be drowned, still he deserves to be." They are wretchedly uncomfortable, these awkward boats, for one not accustomed to them, but experience demonstrates that they are quite safe. As to the natives, they tumble recklessly about in a catamaran, holding on like monkeys, both with hands and feet.

Some of the passengers were observant enough to watch the handsome birds which followed us a thousand miles and more across the sea, even into the harbor of Colombo. There were others of the same species flying about near the shore, but we fancied it possible to select our special fellow travelers, as they still kept near to the ship's masts, though she was now at anchor. Food was thrown to them from the cook's galley, and that important functionary declared that when the ship resumed her voyage, on the following day, the flock of gulls would follow it as closely as heretofore, even through the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean Sea, until the far-away English coast was reached.

Thus much we have said by way of introduction, and having now landed on this "utmost Indian isle," let us endeavor to intelligently depict its unique characteristics, together with its past and present story, for the entertainment and information of the patient reader.

The author who sits down to write upon a given subject is generally so full of his theme that he must constantly put on the brakes, as it were, to curb his fancy. He is never thanked for what he omits from his pages, though there is so much which he might but does not express, lest his readers should feel bored by a detailed account of that which, with the added charm of time and place, may have had unwonted interest for himself. It is to be feared that words rarely convey the real spirit of what most fascinates the eye, and whatever they do not help the reader to see, like glass, they darken.

CHAPTER II.

A Classic Island. — Topographical Position. — Maldivé Islands. — Lands rising out of the Sea. — Size of Ceylon. — Latitude and Longitude. — A Link of a Powerful Chain. — Important British Station. — “Mountain of the Holy Foot.” — Remarkable Mountain View. — Queer Speculations. — Insect Life in the Island. — Acknowledged Gem of the Orient. — Wild Elephants. — In Olden Times. — Far-Reaching Historic Connections. — Arboreal and Floral Beauties. — Perennial Vegetation. — The Feathered Tribe.

CEYLON, the Lanka Dwipe, “resplendent island,” of the Hindus, the fabled isle of the Arabian Nights, and appropriately called the “Pearl of India” by the English, who are its present masters, is separated from the southern extremity of the continent by the Gulf of Manaar. Were it not that a shallow water-course of about fifty miles in width intervenes, the island would be a peninsula. As it is, a barrier to navigation known as Adam’s Bridge, consisting of several ledges of parallel rocks, nearly forms a connection with the mainland. Aided by coral growth and the sand deposit of the ceaseless current setting into the Strait of Manaar from the long reach of the Coromandel coast, this may in the course of time be consummated. The tendency is certainly in that direction, notwithstanding a system of dredging which has been adopted by the English government, enabling vessels which do not draw over ten feet of water to

pass through the strait, and thus avoid the necessity of doubling the island at its southern extremity. Ceylon, — the Serendib of the Arabs, — is the gem of the Indian Ocean, an intimate acquaintance with which fully sustains the delightful promise it suggests to the stranger who beholds it for the first time as he approaches the low-lying, palm-lined shore. Indeed, it might appropriately be called the Isle of Palms, so interminable is the array of cocoanut-trees which fringe the beach.

Judging solely from its present appearance and its geographical position, it would seem to have been a portion of the mainland at some former period, though there are many able writers who do not accept this idea, reminding us that animals, birds, insects, and reptiles which are quite unknown on the continent of India exist in this island. There are no hyenas, tigers, wolves, or foxes here, though there are plenty of these creatures just across the Strait of Manaar. As an argument this is not of so much importance, however, as might at first appear, since there are so many well-known instances of a like character. The dissimilitude of Sumatra and Java, separated by only a narrow channel, occurs to us, as well as that of Madagascar, but narrowly divided from the neighboring continent. So able a writer on physical geography as Sir J. E. Tennent believes that Ceylon is not a dismembered portion of India, but a distinct formation, perhaps part of a continent which has long

since disappeared. In this suggestive opinion Professor Owen also agrees with him.

The Maldivé Islands, situated five hundred miles west of Ceylon, are a group of seventeen coral islets containing a vast number of cocoanut palms, and are rich in varied tropical vegetation. They have a population of thirty thousand Mohammedans, ruled by an hereditary sultan, who pays yearly tribute to the present government of Ceylon in recognition of his dependency.

Legend informs us that two thousand years and more before Christ, multitudes of isles were attached to the kingdom of Lanka (Ceylon), which were suddenly overwhelmed by the sea. At the time of the great catastrophe, it is represented that the splendid capital city of Sri-Lanka-Pura, which stood to the westward of any part of the present island, was engulfed, and disappeared forever. The Portuguese, on their arrival in Ceylon in the sixteenth century, found the natives fully believing in the traditions of its former extent, and its partial submersion. This is duly recorded by the Portuguese writers of that period. The substance of this legend is also to be found in the Mahawanso, or native chronicles of the island.

So far as the flora and fauna of Ceylon are concerned, it resembles the islands of the Malay group lying far to the eastward, much more than it does the land which is situated so near to it at the north. Geologists tell us that the island has for ages past

been slowly rising from the ocean level, and we know that well-preserved marine shells are found in masses at a considerable elevation, ten miles inland, both in the north and the south of Ceylon, and especially in the foot-hills of the central mountain, or Kandian range, as it is called, near Ratnapura. When we pause to consider for a moment the possible age of these marine deposits, preconceived and popular ideas of the time which has passed since the creation of the world are utterly nullified. That the process of rising above sea level has been progressing for ages is undoubtedly true, as in the instance of Norway and Sweden, where careful measurements have been recorded, from time to time, during a period of three hundred years, clearly demonstrating that the land of those countries is steadily rising, while the adjacent sea subsides. In some other instances the process is directly reversed, the land obviously, though slowly, sinking, and the ocean rising. This is a well-known operation, not confined to any one portion of the globe. At the ancient town of Pozzuoli, on the shore of the Bay of Naples, there is a solid marble pavement once belonging to a pagan temple, built between two and three thousand years ago. The temple was doubtless originally founded on the dry land, but this indestructible floor is between nine and ten feet below the level of the sea at this writing.

Ceylon is peculiar in its shape, resembling a cone, the smaller end nearest to the continent which lies so

close to it. This northern portion of the island is a flat, narrow peninsula with a sandy soil, but which by proper management is made to yield certain crops fairly well. The western and southern coasts are low and densely wooded, having many small bays and picturesque indentations, while the eastern side is characterized by a bold and precipitous shore, quite inaccessible from the sea, yet affording one or two excellent harbors and several indifferent ones. The important and much-praised port of Trincomalee is on this side of the island, where several open roadsteads are commercially available for coasting vessels, so built, like most oriental water-craft, that they can be drawn up on the beach in rough weather. The coast is blockaded on the northwest by numberless rocks, shoals, and sandbanks, impeding navigation, though the island can be circumnavigated, as already indicated, by means of the Paumben Pass, between Ramisseram and the continent. The north and northwest coasts are especially low and flat, undoubtedly formed by ages of sand deposits brought down from the north by the ceaseless currents and lodged upon coral formations as a foundation. In area, Ceylon is more than three times the size of Massachusetts, containing twenty-five thousand square miles. The circuit of the island by water is calculated to be about seven hundred miles. In Pliny's time he made the circumference four times that distance. The latest statistics give it a population of three millions,

which is a sparse occupancy for so extensive a territory, and one whose natural resources are sufficient for the support of that number of people many times multiplied. Taken as a whole, the island is perhaps the most thinly inhabited spot in the Orient, though it is the largest and most important of what are known as the crown colonies of the British Empire. Its number of people is annually on the increase, as shown by the English Colonial Blue Book, — an indisputable evidence of material prosperity. The extensive ruins of ancient cities existing in the interior show that there must have been in the past at least thrice the present number of people upon the island, while some authorities place the possible aggregate much higher than we have named, basing their calculation upon the extraordinary size and number of the “buried cities,” one of which is reputed to have contained three million inhabitants, and over four hundred thousand organized fighting men, whose weapons were bows, arrows, and spears.

For the sake of completeness, it may be mentioned that the geographical situation of Ceylon is between the sixth and tenth degrees of north latitude, Point de Galle, in the extreme south, being six degrees from the equator, and Point Pedro, in the farthest north, a trifle less than ten. Dondra Head is a few miles farther southward, and actually forms the extreme point of the island in that direction, but Point de Galle, so much better known, is generally named to

represent the position. In the olden time, the former was a more popular resort than the latter, a fact which some grand ruins clearly establish; indeed, Dondra was the site of the Singhalese capital during a part of the seventh century. A substantial and costly lighthouse has lately been erected here by the English government.

By turning for a moment to any good modern map, the reader will greatly facilitate the ready understanding of these pages.

Lying thus just off the southern point of India, at the entrance of the Bay of Bengal, Ceylon stands, as we have intimated, in the same relation to it that Madagascar does to Africa, forming a link of the powerful chain of fortified outposts which England has shrewdly established to maintain an open route to her Indian possessions. This cordon, beginning at Gibraltar, extends to Malta, Aden, Ceylon, Penang, Singapore, and Hongkong, thus dominating the southern coast of Asia, and insuring the maintenance of British power in the East. Of those named, Ceylon is the most central British military garrison. Colombo, the capital, is situated nine hundred miles from Bombay, six hundred from Madras, fourteen hundred from Calcutta, and sixteen hundred from Singapore. With all these places it has constant steam communication. Sir Henry Ward, then governor of Ceylon, sent an entire infantry regiment to Calcutta at one day's notice, when the outbreak known

as the Indian mutiny occurred in 1857. These troops were the first reinforcement to arrive on the scene at that critical period. Touching the matter of home connection, Colombo is nearly seven thousand miles from England by way of the Suez Canal, which is the most direct route. As we proceed with our story of Ceylon, the relevance of these statistics will become more apparent.

The surface of the island is picturesquely diversified by hills, valleys, and plains. Its highest mountain, Pidurutalagalla, exceeds eight thousand feet, while its most famous one, Adam's Peak, rises a little over seven thousand feet above sea level. This is a lonely elevation, springing abruptly into a sharp cone from the bosom of the low hills which surround it, and from out of a wilderness of tropical jungle. Few mountains of its height require more persistent effort to reach the apex. Serious and even fatal accidents have many times occurred among the pilgrim hosts, who have been drawn hither from great distances for the purpose of prostrating themselves before the alleged footprint. The ascent from the Maskeliya side is much easier than that known as the "Pilgrim's Path" from Ratnapura, but the latter is considered to be the proper one by which the truly devout should seek the holy spot. Upon its summit ceaseless prayers and praises have ascended for thousands of years. Is it an instinct of man, one pauses to ask, which leads him to ascend such a height that

he may seem to be a little nearer to the God he worships? Besides the daily visitors in the month of April, crowds of pilgrims from thousands of miles away in northern India, Persia, and Arabia come hither annually to bow down before a crude indentation of the rocky summit. The natives have a legend that Buddha ascended to Heaven from this mountain, but other religionists substitute the name of Adam; hence the designation which it bears. There is an irregular cavity in the rock supposed to have been made by Buddha's or Adam's foot, whichever may best accord with the pilgrim's faith. But surely the foot of nothing less than a human giant or an elephant would be nearly so large as this misshapen, so-called footprint. It is curious how far zealous fanatics will go in the line of self-deception, and out of what flimsy material fictitious legends can be constructed. Dreamy orientals ascend this mountain solely for devotional purposes, but the western traveler comes up hither with infinite labor to enjoy the grand view from such an elevation, and to see the sun rise in all its glory. He comes also to witness a remarkable natural phenomenon, which once seen is never forgotten. As the sun rises in the east, there suddenly appears upon the western sky the vast reflex of the peak, as clearly defined as though a second and precisely similar mountain were actually there. Through the shadow, which seems to have some peculiar telescopic effect upon the atmosphere,

one sees Colombo distinctly, though it is nearly fifty miles away. As the sun rises higher, the great mysterious shadow fades slowly away like a ghostly phantom, growing less and less distinct, until presently the west is also suffused with the waking and regal glow of the morning.

Then is spread out before the view a scene of inspiration, rich in contrasting effects and remarkable for its variety of lovely tints. One may search half a lifetime without discovering anything to equal its combined charms. The mountain stretching east and west, the verdant plains, the picturesque tea and coffee plantations, the groves of oranges, palms, bananas, and other tropical fruits, are as distinct to the view as though within an arrow's shot. What a charming picture to frame and hang within one's memory.

According to the priests, four Buddhas have visited the peak. The first was there B. C. 3001, the second B. C. 2099, the third B. C. 1014, and the fourth, Gautama, B. C. 577.

Adam's Peak is by actual measurement the fifth elevation in point of altitude among a list of one hundred and fifty mountains varying from three thousand to seven thousand feet in height. It is doubtful if the existence of so well-defined and extensive a mountain range in this equatorial island is generally realized. One would like to know what could have been the primary and real inducement for selecting this spot as a sanctuary. The Buddhists think that

the miraculous impression of Buddha's foot has made the place sacred ; the Hindus revere it as being marked by the foot of Sivá ; the Mohammedan considers it holy as bearing the footprint of Adam ; and so on. How came Hindus, Buddhists, and Mohammedans alike to attribute special sanctity to this particular mountain ? Such unanimity of sentiment among widely differing sects must have had its rise, it would seem, in some legitimate cause, and not in the mere chance selection of a shrine.

A late writer upon the subject of Adam's Peak refers to the fact that in the Septuagint, the word "Serendib" is found in Genesis viii. 4, instead of Ararat, as being the place where Noah's ark rested after the deluge ! Serendib, it should be remembered, is the Arabian name of Ceylon. One thing is quite certain, Asiatics of all creeds join each other in a profound veneration for this bold and striking mountain. Marco Polo, the famous Venetian traveler who wrote seven centuries ago, spoke of the peak as containing the tomb, not the footmark, of Adam. The Mohammedans, ever ready with a poetical legend, still declare that when Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise, they were sent to Ceylon to console them for their banishment.

In order that a story or legend should touch the credulity of, and become current among, oriental people, there are two grand essentials : it must be sufficiently marvelous and ridiculously extravagant.

The author recommends the ascent of Adam's Peak to any member of the Alpine Club who is ambitious to achieve a laborious climb heavenward. There are few mountains only seven thousand four hundred feet in height which present such difficulties as this, when approached from Ratnapura.

The huge iron chains which aid the pilgrims to ascend the almost vertical path are relics of so great antiquity that in the legends of Mohammedans they are associated with the name of Alexander the Great. The marvel is, how even iron could so have withstood the wear of ages, thus exposed to atmospheric influences.

The mountains of Ceylon cover about one sixth of its area, rising in the centre of the middle province, and extending nearly across the island from coast to coast. The southern portion is in all respects the most attractive, though a thousand years ago the northern part of the island was the most populous and the most highly civilized. At the north, there are still to be seen the ruins of cities whose size and riches were once marvelous. Unknown agencies, together with civil wars and foreign invasions, have destroyed these ancient capitals and turned the neighboring highly cultivated lands into a wilderness. To-day it is the region south of the ancient Kingdom of Kandy—a kingdom no more—which most invites the stranger, rendered beautiful by an endless succession of musical streams, waterfalls, mirror-like

lakes, palm groves, and flowery labyrinths, — the very realization of a tropical dream. This region, dense with forests of palms, rich in fruit trees, gorgeous in flowers, is the paradise of fireflies; phosphorescent clouds of these little fairy-like torch-bearers illumine the night at all seasons, reveling beneath the shadow of feathery bamboos and broad-leaved bread-fruit trees. Here they sport, contrasting their pyrotechnic display with the emerald lamps of the glowworms. In the daytime, radiant, sun-loving butterflies on gossamer wings fill the atmosphere with flashing prismatic hues, the harlequin-like parrot and the royal-plumed peacock completing the outdoor carnival of colors.

The great green-winged ornithoptera, prince of the butterfly tribe, rivaling the humming-bird in size, is nearly as abundant as at Singapore, a living gem, measuring six inches across the extended wings, — the giant of its species. Enthusiastic naturalists give fabulous sums for specimens of this beautiful creature, much to the amazement of the simple natives, who have been familiar with it all their lives. The appearance of this lovely insect tribe in Ceylon is gorgeous, in their yellow satin, black velvet, and steel-blue costumes of gossamer texture, daintily spotted with white, green, crimson, and ruby red. These frail beauties are as various in form as in hues, still a perfect harmony of order is always observed. At certain seasons of the year and at uniform inter-

vals, migration of myriads of butterflies takes place in Ceylon, but whence they come in such countless numbers, or whither they go, no one seems to know. When on the wing, these delicate creatures make marvelous progress against the northeast monsoon, though they are of such frail construction that one would think the slightest puff of wind must dismember their bodies. Where there are so many blossoms and odorous flowers, Nature did not forget also to supply myriads of the delightful little humming-birds, which are seen, with breasts and throats of gold and purple, stealing their sweets all day long, yet leaving enough for the innumerable wild honey bees, and to flavor the air with exquisite odors. Ceylon has been called the happy hunting-ground of naturalists, for collectors are overwhelmed by the number, beauty, and variety of specimens which present themselves, and which are easily secured.

A resident told the author of a lady friend who was an enthusiastic naturalist and skillful preserver of specimens, and who visited the island solely to gather examples of this fairy-like creature. She was absent from England five months, three of which were passed in the neighborhood of and at Colombo, Point de Galle, and Kandy. Our informant said that the lady not only added vastly to her own priceless collection, but she realized from those she sold to others a sufficient sum to pay the expense of her visit to Ceylon. Every one might not expect to do this, but

the person referred to was a professional in her line of occupation, and produced finished, artistic results.

It has been the author's privilege to visit nearly all parts of the world, not omitting the principal islands in both hemispheres, north and south of the equator. With this experience, he does not hesitate to place Ceylon in the first rank for natural riches and attractiveness, and, next to Malta, in the same relative position as regards its far-reaching and interesting historical associations. In the exuberance of its vegetation, the productiveness of its glorious palms, the abundance of its luscious fruits, — including that seductive apple of the East, the mangosteen, — and the fascinating beauty of its variegated flora, it is not surpassed by any island or continent on the globe. A spirit of romance is engendered by the very name of Ceylon, the chosen field of oriental fable, recalling its mighty ruins, its unique native gems, its tribes of peculiar people, its mysterious jungles, its array of brilliantly colored birds, and its huge wild animals inviting the spirited hunter to deeds of daring and adventure. A simple statement of statistical facts will emphasize this last reference. The printed records show that, during the five years ending in 1862, sixteen hundred wild elephants were ensnared, and sufficiently tamed to be exported to India. In accomplishing the capture of these, about two hundred are believed to have been killed by the bullets of the hunters, besides others which escaped while so

seriously wounded that they must have died in their nearly inaccessible haunts. Since the date named, such wholesale slaughter has been prohibited by government. Comparatively few are now exported yearly, and the only market for them is India, if we except a limited demand from European zoölogical gardens, and American circuses and traveling menageries.

At one time, not many years ago, the English authorities paid a reward for the killing of elephants. The fact is, they had become so numerous and destructive, especially in the rice-fields at harvest time, that it was absolutely necessary to reduce the number of the wild ones. A reward of ten shillings was therefore offered and paid for each tail brought to the official headquarters. These animals, at that time, had long been undisturbed, and were consequently less shy; while now, on the report of a gun, all the wild elephants within hearing, impelled by an intelligence bought by experience, rush for the depths of the jungle, which is quite inaccessible to human beings. They are mostly magnificent and wary creatures. No white ones are ever seen here, though they are so abundant in Siam. The elephants are measured, in Ceylon, at the shoulders, and a full-grown male stands usually about nine feet in height at this point, rather under than over. The largest elephants on the island are said to haunt the country about the ancient ruins of Pollanarua, where there are

some almost impassable forests. The fever-haunted jungles have no terrors for these huge creatures, which seemingly enjoy entire immunity from all the ills attendant upon such surroundings. In its native wilds, no one ever saw an elephant ill from natural causes. When death threatens them from old age or the wounds of the huntsmen, they retire and hide themselves, to die.

The charms of this island were well known in past ages. It is no new discovery of our day, as the earliest writers celebrated the pearls and gems of "Taprobane," and ornaments composed of its precious stones decked Asiatic queens of beauty twice ten hundred years ago. Ancient thrones were beautified by its sparkling sapphires, and the products of its spice-fields rendered fragrant the fires which burned upon the altars of pagan gods. The Greeks called it the "land of the hyacinth and the ruby." Primitive nomenclature is not only poetically descriptive, but is nearly always appropriate.

The island is very ancient in its historical relations. Its most famous capital is supposed to have been in its prime five or six hundred years before the Christian era, while some of its crumbling monuments belong to a much earlier age. It is confidently believed by many students of history to be the Ophir of the Hebrews; and the fact that it still abounds in rubies, sapphires, amethysts, garnets, and other precious stones, seems, in a degree, to corroborate this

supposition. An intelligent estimate as to the aggregate value of the gems exported from Ceylon during the long past places it at so enormous a figure that we decline to give it in this connection, though fully realizing that the yield has been going on uninterruptedly for a period of two or three thousand years. But aside from this very attractive feature, it is, as a whole, the most beautiful island of the East, producing many other gems besides those of a mineral nature. "It is truly impossible to exaggerate the natural beauty of Ceylon," says the author of "The Light of Asia," and adds: "The island is, in fact, one prodigious garden, where the forces of nature almost oppress and tyrannize the mind, so strong and lavish is the vegetation." Marco Polo, who visited it in the thirteenth century, said that it was the choicest island of its size on the earth; and though, in the dim light of such information as was obtainable in his day, he made some grotesquely incorrect statements relating to the country, he was most certainly right in this superlative praise. He adds that the territory of Ceylon was much larger in former times than in his day, a great part of it having crumbled away and sunk into the sea. This is an important conclusion, with which our modern geographers are very ready to agree, though conjecture only can say to what extent it may have occurred.

As already mentioned, the arboreal and floral display is glorious beyond expression, forming a very

paradise for botanists. Nature seems in this latitude to revel in blossoms of novel and fascinating species. Moisture and heat seek here an outlet to expand their fructifying powers. Situated in the path of the two monsoons, the southwest from the Indian Ocean, and the northeast from the Bay of Bengal, there is hardly a month of the year without more or less rain in Ceylon; vegetation is therefore always green and leafage luxuriant. In the jungle, large and brilliant flowers are seen blooming upon tall trees, while the eye is attracted by others very sweet and tiny in the prolific undergrowth, nestling among creepers and climbing ferns. In fact, the flora is endless in variety and intoxicating in fragrance. Perfume and bloom run riot everywhere. It would be vain to attempt an enumeration of the myriad examples, but memory is quick to recall the charming pitcher plant, the lotus, — its flower eight inches in diameter, — the yellow jessamine, the gorgeous magnolia, with innumerable orchids in their perfection of form and color, not forgetting the orange-hued gloriosa, and the beautiful vine bearing the wild passion-flower. There is also the large pearl-hued convolvulus which blossoms only at night, known in Ceylon as “the moon flower,” and conspicuous through the dimness by its radiant whiteness. Many of the orchids exhibit a most singular similitude to animals and beautiful birds in their unspeakable and sweet variety. At first sight, a collection of them strikes one like a bevy of gor-



geous butterflies and humming-birds, flitting among the green leaves. It seems as if Nature had created them in one of her happiest and most frolicsome moods, — “so true it is,” says Macaulay, “that Nature has caprices which Art cannot imitate.” Occasionally the senses are charmed by the fragrant, yellow-flowered champac, held sacred by the Hindus, from the wood of which the small images of Buddha are carved for the temples. Here, too, we have the odorous frangipane, the flower which Columbus found in such abundance on first landing in Cuba. Was it indigenous, one would like to know, in both of these tropical islands so very far apart? It is a tall plant, with few branches except at the top, but having fleshy shoots with a broad-spread, single leaf. The sensitive plant, which is such a delicate house ornament with us, fairly enamels the earth in this island, growing wild from Adam’s Peak to Point de Galle, multiplying its dainty, bell-like pink blossoms, mingled with the delicate feathery acacia. Growing so exposed, and in weed-like abundance, it is natural to suppose that it would become hardened, as it were, to rough usage; but it is not so, as it retains all its native properties, in exaggerated form, if possible. Our puny little hothouse specimens are not more delicate or sensitive to the human touch than is this Ceylon mimosa. It is the most impressible of all known plants, and is appropriately named. Curious experiments prove this. If a person will fix his eyes

upon a special branch and slowly approach it, the plant is seen gradually to wilt and shrink within itself, as it were, before it is touched by the observer's hand. It is endowed with an inexplicable intelligence or instinct, and what appears to be a dread as regards rude contact with human beings. A few years since, the author was at Cereto, in the island of Cuba, where he was the guest of an English physician who was also a coffee planter. While sitting with the family on the broad piazza which formed the front of the bungalow, a thrifty sensitive plant was recognized and made the subject of remark. The doctor called his young daughter of eleven years from the house.

"Lena," said he, "go and kiss the mimosa."

The child did so, laughing gleefully, and came away. The plant gave no token of shrinking from contact with the pretty child!

"Now," said our host, "will you touch the plant?"

Rising to do so, we approached it with one hand extended, and before it had come fairly in contact, the nearest spray and leaves wilted visibly.

"The plant knows the child," said the doctor, "but you are a stranger."

It was a puzzling experience, which seemed to endow the mimosa with human intelligence.

One brings away especially a vivid memory of the brilliant scarlet and golden bloom which covers the flamboyer so densely as almost to hide from view its

foliage of velvet green. Only in far-away, mid-ocean Hawaii does the traveler see this gorgeous tree so perfectly developed.

The former superintendent of the Royal Botanical Gardens near Kandy, whither we shall take the reader in due time, is a scientific botanist, and an enthusiast in his profession. He tells us that he classified nearly three thousand indigenous plants, which is double the flora of Great Britain, and about one tenth of all the species in the world yet described. Thirty of these are declared to be found only upon this island. If correct, this is certainly a very remarkable fact, and forms an additional incentive for exploration on the part of naturalists.

Any reader of these pages who can conveniently visit Cambridge, Mass., should not fail to enjoy the unique and comprehensive collection of specimens representing the flora of Ceylon, now in the Agassiz Museum. The material is glass, although it seems to be wax, but so perfectly has the work been done, under direction of Professor George L. Goodale, of Harvard College, as to be indeed realistic. We have called this collection unique, and it is absolutely so. Bostonians can find no more charming local attraction with which to entertain appreciative visitors from abroad than this in the department of botany at the institution named.

There is a constant unvarying aspect of green pervading the scenery of Ceylon, owing to the perennial

nature of the vegetation. The trees do not shed their leaves at any fixed period of the year. The ripe and withered foliage drops off, but it is promptly replaced by new and delicate leaves, whose exquisite hues when first expanding rival the blossoms themselves in beauty of color. If fruit is plucked, a flower quickly follows and another cluster ripens, — Nature is inexhaustible. There is no winter interval or sleep for the vegetation, no period of the sere and yellow leaf, as with us in the colder north. The fruits and flowers are ever present, yet there is a certain resemblance to spring and autumn, as we are accustomed to see them. The shrubs and trees are decked more or less with young fresh leaves at all times, while the ground is strewn with those in a state of decay which have ripened and faded out of life. The latter with us are the harbingers of winter, the former coming only with the opening spring. Thus it is that we call it the reign of eternal summer, for all out-of-doors seems like a conservatory of choice flowers and birds of dazzling hues. Although these highly colored creatures of the feathered tribe, like the butterflies, are almost innumerable, one is forced to admit that there are few sweet songsters among them. Paroquets in mottled green, practicing their dainty ways, present themselves in flocks, lighting upon the nearest bushes and branches with a winning fearlessness and confidence. They will slip quietly away if one attempts to catch them, but when taken young they are easily

domesticated, accommodating themselves to human associations with the utmost facility, and though they are left free to seek the woods and jungle when they choose, they are sure to return voluntarily to the cabins of the natives, to be fed and petted by human hands.

One variety of the green paroquet has a curious rose-colored ring about its neck, like the turtle-dove, so delicate and uniform as to seem almost artificial. The natives call it the love-bird. The youthful Singhalese women, like those of Japan, take great pains in the arrangement of their ebon-black hair. It was a unique and very pretty sight observed one day in the native district of Colombo, when a pair of live paroquets' heads, forming the apex to a native woman's abundant coil, were seen coquettishly twisting and turning hither and thither. The little beauties were quite content, perched up there amid their mistress' wealth of tresses. They were hardly confined, though their bodies were laid cosily beneath the braids as though resting in their native nest. What a field this tropical isle would have been for Audubon!

One often sees hovering about the gardens and bungalows a little bird as large as an English sparrow, called the Ceylon bird of paradise, but which does not deserve that name. It has a black head, a neutral-tinted body, and a long tail, five times the length of its body, consisting of pure white feathers.

Its only marked peculiarity, so far as is apparent, consists in its singular and disproportionate tail. It has a little fretful, discordant twitter, but no connected notes. The Singhalese name for the bird escapes us at this writing.

Ornithologists make out a list of over three hundred distinct species of birds in Ceylon, among which the largest variety is found in the parrot family, very nearly equaled by the wading and aquatic tribes.

CHAPTER III.

The Wearisome Tropics. — Waterspouts. — Climatic Conditions. — Length of Days. — A Land Rich in Prehistoric Monuments. — History and Fable. — Last King of Ceylon. — Ancient Ruins. — Aged Cave Temples. — Gigantic Stone Statue of Buddha. — French Vandals. — A Native Chronicle. — Once the Seat of a Great Empire. — System of Irrigation. — Mysterious Disappearance of a Nation. — Ruins of a Vast City. — Departed Glory. — The Brazen Palace. — Asiatic Extravagance. — Ruined Monument.

THE author had been expressing a sense of hearty appreciation, on a certain occasion, in a domestic circle at Colombo, as to the perennial character of the vegetation, together with the endless variety of fruits and flowers in this favored land, but it appeared that those who had adopted it as their home did not find it to be absolute perfection. There is no terrestrial paradise; there was never a golden age; both of these figures of speech are born of poetical license: but to the traveler who recalled for a moment the ice-bound aspect and chilling snow of his New England home which must have prevailed at that moment, the contrast which surrounded him here had a magic charm.

“It seems almost like heresy to say so,” remarked the cultured and amiable wife of our host, an English official, “but one does sometimes weary of the sameness in the verdure of the tropics, lovely as it is,

while remembering with a sigh the beautiful, varying autumn and the joyous springtime of more northern regions. Here we are always upon a dead level, so to speak; no contrasts present themselves. Eternal summer palls upon one. Perpetual youth in the vegetable kingdom," she added, "seems as unnatural and undesirable as it would be in human life. We have no winter, spring, or autumn in our Ceylon calendar."

The equable and fruitful climate of the island is not produced, as is the case upon the west coast of California, by the influence of the ocean. There the Kurosiwo or Japanese current, which closely follows the trend of the land like a mighty river, with a constant temperature resembling the Gulf Stream of the Atlantic, and a width of five hundred miles, makes a semi-tropical climate of a latitude which is often Arctic farther inland. Its equatorial situation alone endows Ceylon with endless summer.

It is curious to observe how the nature of some plants and trees is changed by transplanting them hither, and the same is also remarked of the average individual who has come from other less genial lands to settle in an equatorial climate. If it proves to be a healthy one, he takes very kindly to the delightful do-nothing of such a region, together with its lazy, sensuous enjoyments, losing in a large degree the energy and ambition naturally developed among the people of the north. The moral is obvious. He who

runs may read. It requires a colder clime, with a soil not too willing, to awaken human energy, and to place man at his best. Luxury enervates; necessitous labor strengthens.

Fruit-bearing trees transplanted from the United States, such as peach, cherry, and pear trees, have in many instances ceased to produce fruit, and have become partial evergreens. Experiments with grapevines from northern climates have met with similar results. In nearly the same latitude, however, though in opposite hemispheres, the transplanting of some fruit trees, and especially of the vine, seems to impart fresh life and fruitfulness. Those brought from France and Italy put on new vigor when they are domesticated on the Pacific coast of this continent; while the mission grapevine and others native in California, exported thence to the countries named, flourish marvelously and produce abundantly. At this writing, news comes to us of the partial failure of the grape crop in some of the vineyards of southern France, and also that, following out the results of late experiences, the old vines are to be replaced by the introduction of California varieties. The grapevine does not seem adapted to tropical climes. It is not a perennial growth, but must enjoy its long winter rest in order to thrive. Even in mild, equable southern California, its fruit-bearing branches are cut back annually to the main stalk, where the principal life is stored. The new branches of the mission grape,

as it is called in this region, produce bunches of the luscious fruit yearly, which often weigh four and five pounds each; but as we have said, the new growth is cut away every year after fruiting.

Checking the vagrant inclination of pen and brain to travel afield, let us turn to matters more relative to the expressed purpose of these pages.

The island of Ceylon is favorably situated outside the region of the cyclones which so frequently prevail in the Bay of Bengal and the neighboring ocean, while it is also free from the hurricanes of the Mauritius Sea and the volcanic outbursts of the Eastern Archipelago. There is no evidence of seismic disturbance in this region, either past or present. One does not leave waterspouts entirely behind in the Gulf of Siam, on reaching the shore of this island. Just before the season of the monsoons, they appear sometimes off this coast. They are never, however, of a fierce, whirlwind character, so as to cause any serious harm.

As regards climatic conditions, the coolest season of the year is during the prevalence of the southwest monsoons, or from the end of April to the end of October. The northeast monsoon is of shorter duration, prevailing during November, December, January, and February. Both these periods are ushered in by heavy thunder-storms and a liberal downpour of rain. The reader who has never experienced an equatorial land-storm has no conception of the fury of the ele-

ments under such circumstances. The continued blaze of the fiery lightning and the deafening crash which echoes through the skies are beyond description. Timid people try to hide themselves in the dark corners of the bungalows, while even the natives and animals often become tremulous with fear. It must be admitted that fatal accidents are frequent enough during these thunder-storms to keep an apprehension of danger constantly alive. In the mountain regions about Kandy and Ratnapura, where the echoes supplement the grand electric discharges, the deafening noise and reverberation can only be compared to the quick, sharp, detonating reports of heavy artillery. The monsoons occur with the utmost regularity, both here and over a large portion of the neighboring continent, and they are so regular that their arrival can be calculated upon nearly to a day. Electrical phenomena, thunder and lightning, are, as just intimated, often very grand. So, also, is the prevalence of optical displays, such as rainbows and mirage. As to moonlight nights and their dazzling exhibitions, like those of the tropical regions generally, words are inadequate to express their splendor, at once so brilliant and so calm.

The climate is very much like that of Java, humid and hot, especially in the southern portion nearest to the coast; it is, however, considerably more moderate than that of the mainland of India. Although so very warm, it is equable; one is aware of what to

expect and can prepare for it. Occasional frosts occur in the highlands, but snow is unknown even on the mountain tops. The length of days, owing to the proximity to the equator, does not vary more than one hour, the sun setting at Colombo at about six o'clock all the year round. At Dondra Head, the extreme southern point of Ceylon, the difference between the longest and shortest day of the year is only forty minutes.

This interesting island is rich in prehistoric monuments, Buddhist temples, and lofty dagobas, some of which were originally over three hundred feet in height, exceeding that of the Cathedral of Notre Dame, in Paris, by sixty feet. This, be it remembered, was representative of a civilization which existed upon an island of the Indian Ocean between two and three thousand years ago. The lofty, gorgeous colored, and eccentric temples which the traveler regards with such curious interest in India belong to a much more modern period. They are structures which have been raised oftentimes upon the site of former heathen shrines. So in Rome, many of the churches which we visit to-day and accredit with great antiquity are rebuilt upon edifices formerly dedicated to strange gods. Some remain intact, like the Temple of Hercules and the Pantheon. These Ceylon dagobas are only one class of monuments, and are to be considered in connection with other vestiges of vast public structures, the origin and purpose of

which have been lost sight of in the lapse of ages. Slabs of granite engraved with half-effaced inscriptions in Pali, and in unknown characters, are still found, mystifying the most learned antiquarians, while the significance of others has been made plain by means of commendable patience and scholarly acquirements. What an object lesson is here presented, attesting the evanescence of all mundane power and glory. Here are evidences of vast and costly enterprises, such as the rearing of grand monuments whose legitimate object can only be conjectured, and the names of whose builders are forgotten. The annals of the Singhalese, to whom we are not accustomed to give much credit as a literary people, yet afford consecutive historical data for twenty-four centuries back, though, as in most oriental countries, the records of their past combine truth and fable almost indiscriminately, so that it is often difficult to distinguish one from the other. These Eastern writers had a royal mode of assertion, much more impressive than convincing; as regards the general fidelity of these annals, however, there is no reasonable doubt, after allowing for what may be termed poetical license of expression. We may well ask ourselves how many lands can, like Ceylon, tell so much of their past history in authentic records verified by enduring monuments. As is well known, we in America go back only about four centuries before the trail of history is lost. To be sure, con-

jecture is abundant enough, but conjecture is not history.

Compared with the probable age of the globe, how quickly history fades into fable! Agassiz thought this to be the oldest country of which we have any reliable knowledge. The Western mound builders were undoubtedly a distinctive race, yet who can tell their story? The mysteries of Yucatan are unsolved. There was a civilization once existing in Peru whose history is to us a blank. Of the origin of the Sphinx, older than the Pyramids, what do we really know? On Easter Island, in the South Pacific, are indestructible evidences of an ancient people, who possessed a written language so old that no one can decipher its admirably graven characters. Where did that island come from, and what became of its people? Were they and their country submerged, like another Atlantis, and is this island the apex of a mountain range left above the devouring ocean to tell the tale? This is not a wild supposition. It has been suggested and declared possible by more than one astute and scholarly writer upon physical geography. As to antiquity, the monuments of Egypt enable us to trace back the history of civilized man only six thousand years, though all intelligent archæologists know that the earth must have been inhabited by human beings an infinite number of years prior to that period. Philology and geology are sufficient to prove this.

Singhalese annals record in detail the reign of one hundred and sixty sovereigns during a period extending from the conquest of the island, B. C. 543, by Wijaya, a prince from northern India, to the deposition of Wikram Raja Sinka by the English in 1815. This was the last king of Kandy, the then native capital of Ceylon. Sufficient is recorded of the personal character of Wijaya, the early conqueror of the island, to prove his utter barbarity, so that we are naturally led still more to wonder whence came the artists — for artists they were — who designed and built such cities as Anuradhapura and Pollonaruwa, the first of which was probably founded during his reign. Either the Singhalese as a race must have retrograded in a most marvelous manner, while other nationalities were in the line of progress, or foreign artists and builders must have been imported to rear such grand and beautiful capitals in this Indian isle. Does the reader realize that our best architects to-day go back for suggestions to the elaborate and elegant ornamentations which prevailed at this period in stone columns and lofty façades? Though scarred by warfare with the ages, these still form rare and choice object lessons to the appreciative artist.

Among the remarkable evidences of great antiquity in Ceylon, we recall the elaborate cave-temples of Dambula, hewn out of the primitive rock, and which have existed at least two thousand years, representing an infinite amount of patient labor, which must have

been executed with tools admirably adapted to the purpose assigned. The principal temple — there are four of them — was dedicated to Buddha, whose creed is still the prevailing faith of Asia, — a doctrine ages older than our so-called Christian religion. The entrance to the principal cave-temple is elaborately carved in the solid stone, and is wonderfully well-preserved. The design is harmonious with the purpose, presenting a score or more of figures in bas-relief, with embellishments appropriate to the Buddhist faith. Two mammoth figures, one on either side, represent, probably, guardian spirits or gods. Just within, there is an altar with a sitting figure of Buddha, opposite the entrance. It is interesting to note the ornamental entrance to the temple, as exhibiting the degree of artistic appreciation which existed here in Ceylon between two and three thousand years ago. This largest temple is one hundred and eighty feet long, eighty wide, and twenty-five high, a gloomy vault at best, containing a gigantic recumbent stone statue of Buddha, forty-seven feet in length, the head resting on the right hand, indicating repose, one of the favorite positions in which the prophet is usually represented in the temples of Ceylon. The chambers or halls, which are hollowed out of the rock, are reached by long flights of stone steps. Each temple is most grotesquely painted with scenes supposed to represent the past history of the island. In the first of the caves is the immense statue already

spoken of. In the others are those of ancient kings in heroic size, but not nearly so large as that of Buddha. On the several walls are rudely-painted tournament scenes, elephant hunts, and half-effaced battle pictures. Some of the apartments have iron-grated windows, and were evidently places of confinement for political prisoners, some time in the far past. An old Buddhist priest is in charge, grumpy, reticent, and apparently dissatisfied with himself and the world generally. In the first and largest of the stone chambers of this huge rock at Dambula, besides the large recumbent figure of Buddha, there is a statue of Vishnu, held especially sacred, and before which solemn oaths in litigated cases were administered, without any other recourse for settlement. This was when one of the parties agreed to abide by the solemn oath of the other, to be given in specified form before this statue of Vishnu. It is a rudely executed figure in granite, as indeed are all the statues of the period. In the second chamber or temple there are half a hundred statues of Buddha, besides representatives in stone of various heathen gods, painted in yellow, blue, and white robes, but why the multiplicity of Buddhas it would be difficult to divine. In front of the cave-temples is a flourishing boo-tree, and a small grove of cocoanut palms which have grown to a great size. As usual, centuries of age are claimed for the first-named tree. Round about the plain, among the rude, wild vegetable

growth, a peculiar cactus is seen, a familiar acquaintance, first met with on the plains of Mexico. Its thick leaves form also its branches, each leaf being attached to its neighbor endwise, like links of a chain, and being bordered by a bright yellow ruffle of profuse blossoms. These cave-temples of Dambula are cut in a solitary mass of rock, rising from the otherwise level plain to about five hundred feet in height and four times that in length. This is undoubtedly the most remarkable group of cave-temples upon the island.

One is vividly reminded by these peculiar and enduring structures of a similar famous place of Hindu worship cut out of the solid rock on the island of Elephanta in the outer harbor of Bombay, and also of those found at Ellora and Carlee, in India proper. These three Buddhist temples are known to have been in existence for about twenty centuries, and are very similar in design. The elaborate sculptures in bas-relief which decorate them are almost identical in character, but they have little or no artistic merit, being in fact as crude as Chinese or Japanese idols, mere caricatures as seen from a modern point of view, and yet they are clearly the result of a distinctive purpose. As to depicting the human figure with any regard to its anatomy, that was not understood by these artists, any more than are the laws of perspective by the Chinese or Japanese of to-day. So in ancient Egyptian sculpture, an

approximation to the true outline of the human figure is all that is attempted. The stone pillars and figures at Elephanta, so venerable from age and association, were nearly destroyed by French cannon-balls, the guns being brought on shore at considerable trouble, and maliciously directed, for this purpose. It seemed to be a fixed principle with the soldiers of the first Napoleon to purloin everything of value which was portable in the countries they invaded, and what they could not steal and carry away, with true barbaric instinct they destroyed. Churches, charitable institutions, hospitals, were all alike looted by these French vandals. Even tombs were invaded by them in their rapacity, as at Granada, where the leaden coffins in the royal vaults were pried open with bayonets in search of treasures supposed to have been buried with the bodies. At Seville, they broke open the coffin of Murillo, wherein finding nothing of commercial value, they scattered the ashes of the great master in art to the wind. It will also be remembered that Marshal Soult — to his lasting disgrace be it recorded — treated the ashes of Cervantes in a similar manner; a most petty and disgraceful meanness for a marshal of France to be guilty of.

The Mahawanso, “Genealogy of the Great,” a native chronicle, contains a history of the several dynasties which have controlled the island from B. C. 543 down to A. D. 1758. This unique and remarkable Singhalese book is a metrical chronicle written

in Pali verse, and forms what is universally received as an authentic and most invaluable record of the national history of Ceylon. A scholarly translation of the same is now extant in English. Pali, as the reader doubtless knows, is a dead language founded upon the Sanscrit, though Buddhists claim that it is the original of all tongues. This is an assumption easily disproved by Egyptian inscriptions dating back over six thousand years. The island, under its Sanskrit name of Lanka, is also the subject of a mythical poem of the Hindus, and its conquest by Rama is the theme of the Ramayana, doubtless one of the most ancient epics in existence. The Mahawanso, though the oldest, is by no means the only Singhalese chronicle of a historic character. It was designed by a priest named Mahanamo, who compiled the early portion, commencing five centuries and more before Christ, and bringing it down to the year 301 of our era. After this it was continued by able successors, who carried on the original plan of the beginner to the period when the English took forcible possession of Ceylon. There are several comprehensive manuscripts devoted to native history, written upon talipot palm-leaf, carefully preserved in the museum at Colombo.

Besides these important records there is abundant evidence of a tangible character to show that there once existed upon this island a great and powerful empire in a condition of advanced civilization. The

gigantic remains of palaces and temples tell us this. There are also evidences of a system of irrigation which was remarkably perfect in conception and consummation, though it must have been achieved by the simplest means, that is, by the aid of no mechanical facilities such as we possess. This system covered the face of the country, north and south, like a network. Immense lakes were formed by damming the natural outlets of the mountain streams at the mouth of extensive valleys, and that was all that was artificial about them. Nature had prepared the way; still, the amount of labor involved in the practical application of the principle was enormous. The remains of these great reservoirs thus created are objects of admiration to our modern engineers, not only for the boldness and magnificence of their construction, but also for the beneficence of their purpose. The marvelous ruins of these reservoirs are the proudest and most significant monuments which remain of the former greatness of this country. No constructions for a similar purpose found in any part of the world have ever surpassed them. So long as they were in repair and fully operative, the people of Ceylon had no occasion to go abroad for rice upon which to subsist. The grand supply of water for the distributing tanks was conducted from the distant mountains, through dense forests, across broad ravines, and around the sides of intervening hills, by stout channel-ways miles and miles in length. No consid-

erable population could have been supported in a country subject to prolonged droughts without the aid of some such fertilizing agency, and no other system would have been so well adapted to the raising of the staple grain of the island. Most of these artificial lakes are now in ruins, overgrown with jungle grass, and in some instances by heavy forests.

No one can truly say what caused the decadence of the several ancient capitals now lying in the dust, leaving only a blank memorial of their former existence. It is a puzzling question as to what could have swept a population of millions from the face of the globe and left no clearer record of their occupancy and departure. When there is pointed out to the traveler in Japan a location where a big and populous city once stood, but which is now only a series of thrifty grain-fields, no great surprise is felt. Japanese houses are only constructed, as a rule, of bamboo frames with tissue coverings, but the ruined cities of Ceylon were built of stone and brick, presumably indestructible except by some great and general catastrophe. The ruins of Anuradhapura show that in mediæval times it must have been a city containing a vast concourse of people. We know that it was recognized as the capital of Ceylon from three to four hundred years prior to the birth of Christ down to the year 770 of the present era. It has been justly called the Palmyra of Ceylon, and was contemporary with Babylon and Nineveh. It was a royal city,

wherein ninety kings reigned in succession, and its dimensions exceeded the present area of London. What a grand and imperial metropolis it must have been in its pristine glory! At a time when England was still in a condition of barbarism, this capital of an island in the Indian Ocean was at the zenith of its prosperity, enjoying luxuries which argued a high condition of civilization. The reason for selecting this plain in the heart of the country as a suitable location for its capital is not obvious, except that from the earliest ages the spot has been sacred to the votaries of Buddha. Its site is near the centre of the great plain which occupies the northern portion of the island, about one hundred miles from Kandy, and three hundred feet above the level of the sea.

Here, amid tall trees and thick undergrowth, are scattered hundreds, nay, thousands of stone columns, huge monoliths, granite statues, fragments of grand palaces, and elaborate public buildings, which once adorned broad and level thoroughfares, while the surrounding country exhibited a wide expanse of rice-fields irrigated by numberless canals, together with all the beauty of cultivated tropical vegetation. The early chronicles tell us of the surprising loveliness of this region round about the ancient metropolis, the brilliancy of its native jewels, the fertility of its carefully nurtured soil, its magnificent palms, the abundance of its fruits, the sagacity of its elephants, and the constant fragrance of its spice-laden atmosphere.

Anuradhapura! how little we of the nineteenth century have even heard of its people, who built temples of stone and palaces of marble, — a nation which lived for twenty centuries in oriental splendor; a city which was rich, populous, and famous, long before Rome had risen to power; a capital which achieved such ambitious architectural results only to sink at last suddenly and mysteriously into oblivion. What the possible purpose could have been in creating such a singular page in the annals of history as the building and peopling of a giant metropolis on this Indian island, whose accomplished mission illustrates only the mutability of all terrestrial things, only that inscrutable Wisdom which rules the universe can answer.

Except the mountain range which so nearly divides the island at its centre, and the spurs which it throws out at intervals, there are few elevations worthy of notice in Ceylon. One, known as Mihintale, about a thousand feet in height, dominates the ruins of the ancient city just described, and is so perpendicular that to reach its summit one must avail himself of the artificial steps cut in the solid rock. These stones, smoothed and indented by centuries of use, are said to have been thus worn by thousands and thousands of pilgrims, who ascended to the shrine above upon their knees. This notable hill, which almost deserves the name of mountain, was fortified by the aborigines in the olden time, as

shown by irregular lines of defensive works in stone, whose dismantled and disintegrated condition testifies to their antiquity. On the summit stands a shrine, showing that it was held to be a sacred spot from the earliest ages, probably long before the date when the now mouldering capital was founded. The view afforded on either hand from the apex of the mount embraces the far-away ocean, and the nearer sea of undulating forests and groves of palms, clad in the exquisite verdure of the tropics.

Anuradhapura was the largest city in the island, and is confidently asserted to have contained, in its prime, three million people, over four hundred thousand of whom were fighting-men. But there were others, considerable in size and importance, which existed during the period of its prosperity. The records show that this ancient metropolis was fifty-two miles in circumference, or sixteen miles across in a straight line from the north to the south gate, covering two hundred and fifty-six square miles! What have we in modern times to equal these ruins in spaciousness? Perhaps some deduction should be made from such remarkable figures. Of course, the reader will understand that the area here given was not actually covered by solid blocks of dwellings. Private residences were generally surrounded by small but elaborate gardens. There was ample air space about the temples, palaces, and public buildings, together with large open commons for military parades,

for public baths, for elephant fights, for political forums, and market-places. Spaciousness and elegance were the characteristics of this ancient Singhalese metropolis, this grand city of the plains, where one stands to-day surrounded by centuries of tangible history. The eye rests upon miles and miles of broken stone statues of bulls, elephants, sarcophagi, and heavy capitals of granite columns, many of whose delicate, artistic capitals and designs are still intact.

All oriental narrative is tinctured with exaggeration, but Sir James Emerson Tennent, so long officially connected with the island, and personally familiar with the ruins of Anuradhapura, says no one who visits the place to-day can doubt that Ceylon, in the zenith of its prosperity, contained ten times its present population; and as he wrote this in 1859, when the aggregate was about one million, he wished to signify that the number of inhabitants, at the period to which he referred, was probably ten millions. The same writer tells us that this density of population must have been preserved through many centuries, in spite of revolutions and invasions, in order to produce the results, the ruins of which are still visible to all observers.

That the people of Anuradhapura were early and skillful workers in brass, iron, and glass, articles unearthed among these ruins abundantly testify. Further explorations and excavations will doubtless result in valuable information. Five or six feet of

earth, upon an average, must be removed before the process of uncovering can be said to have fairly commenced, so that the prospective labor of exhumation is simply immense. Still, almost every year brings some new enthusiast to the front, whose time and money are freely devoted to this object until his ardor is appeased, and he leaves the field to some one else. A steadily sustained effort, aided and directed by the government, might accomplish something worth recording, but such desultory and spasmodic attempts are of very little account. At Pompeii, where, by persistent effort, a whole city has been unearthed, we see what such exhumation signifies, though the circumstances are not precisely similar, the one having been suddenly covered by an eruption of the neighboring volcano, while the other yielded to the wear of time and the effect of foreign invasions. A score of cities, however, like Pompeii would not cover the area once occupied by this vanished metropolis.

The ancient capital was named in honor of a certain prince, Anuradha, by whom it was founded twenty-five centuries ago. A thousand years since, this city was still populous, gay, and beautiful, with fragrant gardens, thriving shops, proud dwellings, gilded palaces, lofty temples, religious processions, and frequent displays of royal pageants. The Singhalese chronicles are full of references to agricultural prosperity, to ample herds, the breeding of

cattle, and the extensive culture of grain. They speak of women who were treated with great deference, and of priestesses and queens who held high places with honor. Rich furniture was used in the dwellings, and costly textures for dress, these of course imported from other countries. Though the inhabitants of Anuradhapura were not themselves a maritime people, they were constantly visited by others from afar, who brought with them rich goods to exchange for pearls and precious stones. We know that Ceylon was rich in these at that period, even as she is at the present time, and exported peacocks, apes, and ivory. In the ancient Hebrew records, the names of these were the same as those known at present to the natives in this island. To-day, mutability is written upon its scattered and neglected ruins in a language all can understand. Who can wonder that individuals perish and are forgotten, when the entire population of a great, imperial metropolis thus vanish, while their noblest and most enduring works crumble into dust? The significance of such instances should humble the proudest mortal who walks the earth. The spot where the Brazen Palace, so-called, once stood in the ancient capital still shows scores of granite columns in the shape of undressed monoliths, projecting about twelve feet above the level of the ground, upon some of which there exist the remains of elaborate capitals, closely resembling the Grecian Corinthian order. This edi-



fice, dating about two hundred years before Christ, was not the royal residence, but a palace devoted to accommodation of the priesthood, and was originally nine stories in height, covering a square of ground measuring two hundred and thirty feet each way. "The roof," according to native chronicles, "was of brass, and its great hall, which was supported by golden pillars, also contained a throne of solid ivory," though what the Buddhist priesthood required of a "throne" we are not informed.

This description of the great hall with its golden pillars sounds perhaps like an oriental exaggeration, but the people of those days came originally from India, where such examples of extravagance were by no means unknown during the Mogul dynasty. The probability is that the Brazen Palace was in reality the royal residence. Speaking of Indian extravagance, we all remember the peacock throne of the king of Delhi, — a throne of solid gold, six feet long and four feet broad, surmounted by a canopy of gold, and supported by twelve pillars composed of the same precious material. The back of this costly structure was made to represent a peacock with its tail-feathers expanded, hence the name. The natural colors of the feathers were closely imitated with rubies, sapphires, diamonds, and other precious stones. The total value of the whole exceeded thirty million dollars. The author has stood within this royal chamber at Delhi, but the gorgeous throne has long since

disappeared. Enough, however, still remains to show what regal splendor must have existed in this marvelous palace. These Mogul rulers used costly gems, gold and silver, together with precious marbles and rarest stones, as freely as modern potentates employ granite, combined with bricks and mortar. The wealth of the then known world was in the possession of a very few individuals, and the poor were all the poorer in comparison; despotism was rampant, and royalty commanded at will the unpaid services of the million.

Near the site of the Brazen Palace of Anuradhapura are several dagobas, partially hidden by rank tropical verdure. One of these peculiar structures was originally over four hundred feet in height, antedating the Christian era by many years. Does the reader realize what an amount of solid masonry such a structure represents? When we say that this dagoba was nearly twice the height of Bunker Hill Monument, and that it was three hundred and sixty feet in diameter at the base, the comparison may aid the imagination. Verily, nothing but the Egyptian pyramids compare in magnitude with these shrines of Ceylon, while no modern engineering enterprise excels in immensity the artificial lakes which were created upon her surface. One writer has gone into a careful calculation regarding the structure, and says that it contained material enough originally to build a wall ten feet high from London to Edinburgh.

These peculiarly shaped dagobas are scattered all

over the island, each being the receptacle of some saintly relic. Tradition says they are thus formed to resemble a bubble floating upon the water, but they are really bell-shaped, and most of them have a low, ornamental spire. Near the summit is the secret chamber wherein is deposited the sacred treasure. Time effaces all mundane things. With the exception of the Temple of the Tooth, at Kandy, no one can say what special relic any one of these remarkable structures was originally designed to shelter.

Let us quote for the reader's edification an ancient native description of this famous city of the plain when it was in its glory. It is a literal translation from the original: —

“The magnificent city of Anuradhapura is refulgent from the numerous temples and palaces whose golden pinnacles glitter in the sky. The sides of its streets are strewed with black sand; they are spanned with arches bearing flags of gold and silver; on either side are vessels of the same precious metals, containing flowers; and in niches are statues holding lamps of great value. In the streets are multitudes of people, armed with bows and arrows; also men powerful as gods, who with their huge swords could cut asunder a tusk elephant at one blow. Elephants, horses, carts, and myriads of people are constantly passing and repassing. There are jugglers, dancers, and musicians of various nations, whose chank shells and other musical instruments are ornamented with

gold. The distance from the principal gate to the opposite gate is four gaws (sixteen miles); and from the north gate to the south gate four gaws. The principal streets are Moon Street, Great King Street, and Great Sandy Street. In Chandrawakkawidiya are eleven thousand houses, many of them being two stories in height; the smaller streets are innumerable. The palace has immense ranges of buildings, some of two, others of three stories in height; and its subterranean apartments are of great extent."

Sir J. E. Tennent gathers from various ancient sources, including the veritable Mahawanso, that Anuradhapura, between four and five centuries before Christ, contained the temples of various religions, — "temples and palaces whose golden pinnacles glittered in the sky," — besides spacious public gardens and free baths, together with almshouses and hospitals, in which animals as well as human beings were tenderly cared for.

One king gave the "corn of a thousand fields" for the support of the hospitals, another set aside a certain quantity of rice to feed the squirrels which frequented the city gardens, while a third monarch displayed his skill in treating the diseases of elephants, horses, and domestic cattle. The streets were lined with grand shops and bazaars. On festive occasions, barbers and dressers were stationed at each entrance to the capital for the convenience of strangers who visited the city.

Public officials vied with each other in their patriotic deeds designed for the public good.

In one corner of the widespread ruins of Anuradhapura there is now a small village, with a Christian mission and school for the native children. There are also a few bazaars, a post-office, telegraph station, and a court house, which serve, by affording a strong contrast to the former splendor which reigned here, to emphasize the historic grandeur of the defunct capital.

CHAPTER IV.

Oriental Dagobas. — Ancient City of Pollonarua. — Laid out like our Modern Capitals. — Unexplored Ruins. — Elaborate Stone Carvings. — Colossal Stone Figure. — The “Buried Cities.” — The Singhalese not a Progressive People. — Modern History of Ceylon. — Captured by the English. — The “Resplendent Island.” — Commercial Prosperity. — Increasing Foreign Population. — Under English Rule. — Native Soldiers. — Christian Sects and Churches. — Roman Catholic Church. — Expulsion of the Jesuits.

THE very interesting and in many respects unique ruins of Anuradhapura, like those pertaining to the city of Pollonarua, with its curious and enormous mass of crumbling brick-work in the shape of a dagoba surmounted by a temple, are supposed to have been thus mouldering in the dust for more than six centuries. These dagobas, dotting with age, as we have shown, are relic shrines, like in purpose to the pagodas of Burmah, which they somewhat resemble. Their substantial outside finish must have given them very much the appearance of being built of pure white marble. In dimensions they are exceeded only by the pyramids of Ghizeh, but there is no genius or architectural excellence evinced in the construction of either. Judged by the light of our day, there is no legitimate reason for their existence. Religious fanaticism gave birth to one, and personal pride to the other. They neither subserve the pur-

pose of utility nor of beauty. As monuments of personal aggrandizement, or as individual memorials, what total failures they have proved! Think for a single moment of the vast contrast between either of the Egyptian pyramids; or these bell-shaped dagobas, with their plain stuccoed coverings, and that modern shrine and tomb combined, — the Taj Mahal of Agra. The pyramids and dagobas are crude, barbaric embodiments of bulk and imposing loftiness; the other is a realization in marble of a poetic dream. The former are remarkable only for magnitude; the latter, for its exquisite grace.

There is sufficient evidence still left us to show that the olden city of Pollonaruwa was laid out in a perfectly systematic way, and built up in the most regular manner. Its founders evidently started with a well-perfected purpose. It was not a chance settlement of a few cabins, which gradually increased hither and thither in various directions until it assumed the proportions of a metropolis. Notwithstanding the present confusion, the general features of its topography are clearly discernible amid the mounds of mouldering material. The main street from the principal entrance-gate continued perfectly straight for four miles between royal palms to the opposite extreme of the city, crossed at right angles in the centre by a similar thoroughfare, thus forming two main streets, which terminated at four great gates of entrance and exit to and from the town, — north,

east, south, and west. From these main streets radiated lateral and smaller roadways, evidently occupied by humbler dwellings, together with an occasional temple or other public building. The ruins of what is known as the Treasure House of Pollonaru are unusually interesting, as exhibiting some of the finest and best preserved bas-reliefs to be found in Ceylon, and as showing also certain marked peculiarities of skill in architecture which prevailed in pre-Christian times. On either side of the principal thoroughfares of the city were handsome and substantial dwellings, palaces, and sacred temples. The latter, with their gorgeous gilded domes, were dedicated to various pagan gods. Other spacious buildings and open areas were devoted to pleasure entertainments for the masses of the people, not unlike the modern idea of public gardens and outdoor theatres.

Here and there labyrinths of unexplored ruins are entirely hidden by lofty, broad-limbed trees and a tangle of low, dense shrub, as though the big city had been originally built in a forest. We pause, and gaze thoughtfully at the desolation which speaks so emphatically in its dumb way. It is the language in which the decline and fall of great empires is written, — monuments of mutability.

“Tully was not so eloquent as thee,
Thou nameless column with the buried base.”

It is not to be wondered at that learned European

antiquarians make pilgrimages hither to see with their own eyes what others have graphically described, and to translate for themselves these black-letter records of by-gone ages. We met at Pollonaruwa one enthusiastic traveler who had neither eyes nor ears for anything else but that which related to the almost forgotten past. The mouldering ruins of Ceylon were food and drink to him, with which he gorged himself to repletion. Each new student of antiquity who comes hither, being informed of the progress of those who preceded him, takes up the thread of discovery where they left it, and adds something to illumine the darkness which enshrouds these sombre ruins.

It could not always have been peaceful in these populous cities of the past, where strange gods and strange customs prevailed. The imagination easily depicts dire tragedies and bloody conflicts which must have drenched their broad avenues with blood. Such has been the history of the world since the beginning of time.

The best-preserved construction amid all the ruins is a Buddhist rock-temple, which, having been hewn out of the native stone, is still intact, though supposed to date back three hundred years before our era. It is only a small chamber about twenty feet square, containing an altar and three stone figures of Buddha in different positions, sitting, reclining, and standing. The entrance to the chamber is an archway; on either side, inscriptions are engraven in the

Pali language, but these, we were informed, had never been translated. The native rock, from which the small temple is cut, rises abruptly from the level plain.

Anuradhapura, as wonderful in its way as Pompeii or Herculaneum, is known as the ancient capital of Ceylon, and Pollonarua as the mediæval, but even the former is antedated by other half-buried cities in the island, that of Bintenne, for instance, which exhibits ruins of great interest and of admitted antiquity. There is a dagoba here which is spoken of by the former Dutch occupants of the island, in A. D. 1602, as being still in good preservation, surmounted by a gilded dome, while its smooth, white exterior was quite unblemished. The wear and tear of the centuries has not yet obliterated this monument.

These dagobas, shaped like half an eggshell, are very similar to the topes of India proper. The interior consists of earth and sun-dried clay, built about and rendered substantial with burned bricks and tiles, the whole being coated on the exterior with a stone-like mortar or chunam. The burned bricks which are found in the débris of the "buried cities" have their form quite perfect, and were so well fired when made that they still retain their sharpness and consistency. The best examples of brick-work are to be found among the ruins of Pollonarua, where the mortar that was originally used shows the remains of the burned pearl-oyster shells from which it was made.

The principle of the true arch secured by its key-stone does not seem to have been understood by the people of that period in this island, though what is called the false arch, produced by projecting one layer of bricks beyond another, is clearly shown. The carving in stone was carried to a high degree of excellence, and is still in good preservation, as shown upon slabs, risers to steps, and on octangular columns of graceful proportions. The entrance to some of the cave-temples also exhibits ability in the carving of stone which is of no mean quality, depicting innumerable single figures and many groups. None of the Indian topes are more than half as large as these Ceylon dagobas. The latter were solid, hemispherical masses, standing upon a raised square platform of granite six or eight feet high, and approached by broad stone steps. The incrustation of the dome-like edifice was after the fashion of our modern stucco process, except that it was very much more thickly laid on. The preparation consisted of lime, cocoanut water, and the glutinous juice of a fruit which grows upon the paragaha-tree. This compound was pure white when dried and hardened, receiving a polish like glass, and was remarkable for durability.

We were told of, but did not see, carved stone capitals and elaborately draped monoliths, found among the ruins of Bintenne, which represented early perfection in architecture as displayed in a region now indeed barbaric, but where a civilization

flourished in the far past in all the pride and pomp of oriental grandeur. To-day, the jackal and the panther, unmolested by man, prowl about the spot in search of prey.

When the hosts who formed the population of these long-buried cities disappeared we may not know, nor what fate befell them. There are many intelligent theories about the matter, but very little positive evidence. The most plausible supposition would seem to be that a devastating famine must have been the fatal agent. Most of the works which these people left behind them, except the bell-shaped and nearly indestructible dagobas, are now covered with rank vegetation. The first structure of this character erected at Anuradhapura is still extant, and is believed by some writers to be one of the oldest architectural monuments in India. With this conclusion we certainly cannot agree, as the chronicles tell us it was raised by King Tissa, at the close of the third century before Christ, over the collar-bone of Buddha. The author has seen at Benares many sacred structures, some in ruins, which are much more ancient. After all, these milestones of the centuries afford us little data by which to unravel the mysteries of the past in Ceylon. They are only isolated mementos, forming disjointed links in the chain connecting us with by-gone ages, mute but eloquent witnesses of a former and high degree of civilization. The most erudite antiquarian finds no coherent or reliable his-

tory in such crumbling monuments ; generalities only can be deduced from them, however suggestive and interesting they may prove.

Neither the ancient nor the modern Singhalese seem to have had any distinctive order of architecture, though the variety which they adopted was infinite. Here, among these half-defaced ruins, one detects Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Moorish inspirations, calculated to puzzle the scientist as to their probable origin. The singular conglomerates of our own day are not more confusing than some of the best-preserved specimens to be found in these ruined cities of ancient Ceylon.

Another notable object of antiquarian interest in the island is recalled in this connection. It is that of a colossal, upright figure of Buddha, a figure hewn out of the solid rock, to which it is still attached, though it is statuesque and not in bas-relief, the original material only furnishing its support at the back. This rude piece of sculpture is fifty feet in height and otherwise duly proportioned, vividly recalling the mammoth bronze statue of Dai-Butsu at Kamakura, in Japan, which is nearly sixty feet in height, though it is represented in a sitting position. Within this statue fifty people can stand together, the interior being fitted like a chapel. As regards antiquity, the Japanese figure is supposed to be but six centuries in age, while that of Ceylon is surely three times as old, and probably four. The great

Singhalese statue is now in the jungle, which has grown up about it during centuries of neglect, near to the great Tank of Kalawera. The surrounding rocks were in ancient days turned into a cave-temple with infinite labor, by hewing and excavating them into chambers of suitable dimensions. Without excellent tools of steel and iron, very nearly approaching in efficiency those of our own time, this could not possibly have been accomplished.

The carved pillars, fluted, beveled, and spiral columns, mounds of ruined masonry, crumbling flights of stone steps, ornamental fragments of temples, and granite statues skillfully wrought which are scattered in all directions throughout the jungle, in some instances overgrown by tall trees, attest both departed greatness and far-reaching antiquity. Broken bricks, tiles, and sculpture are so knit together by snake-like tree-roots, while shaded by their lofty branches, as to form one solid mass for hundreds of rods together, dotted here and there by simple wild flowers which modestly rear their delicate petals and perfume the air. One represents the tomb of decayed magnificence and oriental luxury, the other is the sweet and simple emblem of Nature undefiled. Thus she covers up the wrinkles of age with blooming vegetation, screening the mouldering architecture of a forgotten race beneath fresh arboreal and floral beauties. There still remain, though partially buried beneath the earth, the suggestive memorials of a

prosperous and energetic people, who were once the possessors of this beautiful Indian isle. These decaying monuments are at the same time indisputable evidence of the high civilization which once existed here, and also, sad to realize, of the deterioration of the Singhalese as a people. However gradual may have been the decadence of the race from the proud condition of their ancestors who built the "buried cities," the contrast is so strong to-day as to seem singularly abrupt, notwithstanding the intervening centuries.

Fifty years ago, it was only at the risk of one's life that these famous ruins of Ceylon could be reached. Such expeditions were not even attempted without a strong escort and governmental aid. Hostile native tribes and equally fatal malarial influences, together with almost impassable forests and unbridged rivers, were all arrayed against the curious visitor. This is now changed so that enterprising travelers can with but little trouble enjoy a view of some of the most extraordinary monuments to be found in the East, and which are of much more than ordinary archæologic and artistic interest.

In this neighborhood, at Vigitapora, are the ruins of a city, once a royal residence, which is more ancient than Anuradhapura. This place was a populous centre five hundred years before the Christian era, of which there seems to be little if any record preserved, even in the comprehensive pages of that national text-book, the Mahawanso.

The native tribes of Ceylon cannot be said to form a progressive race, even under the advantages which modern civilization affords them. Their present condition is one of dormancy. Those who form the rising generation, after enjoying school advantages to a certain degree, on arriving at the age of responsibility lapse, with some exceptions, into the condition of their parents. Thus many of our Western Indians, who in youth have been educated in schools presided over by the whites, return finally to their native surroundings, promptly adopting from choice the barbaric methods and rude life of their roaming tribes. There is a certain wild instinct which it seems almost impossible to eradicate. A few native Singhalese have availed themselves of the opportunities freely extended to them, and have risen to position and influence both with their own race and the European population. There are also descendants of English fathers and native mothers, who, after enjoying special advantages, have developed into intelligent manhood, and who form a recognized element of the community. A native Singhalese is, or was very lately, judge of the supreme court of Ceylon, while the offices of attorney-general and government solicitor were, and we believe still are, filled by natives. Others of the same race are respected as county judges, magistrates, and leading barristers.

So far as current history can be relied upon, we find that Ceylon was, from five hundred years and

more before the Christian era up to the time of its annexation to Great Britain, the almost constant victim of foreign and civil wars. Indeed, this seems to have been the chronic condition of the world at that period. The Portuguese first and the Dutch afterward took possession of the island, the latter being finally expelled by the English, who promptly fortified and have held it ever since.

The rapacity, bigotry, and cruelty which characterized the rule of the Portuguese in Ceylon forms one of the darkest pages in the history of European colonization. An eminent writer upon the period says very tersely and truly that these people first appeared in the Indian Ocean in the threefold character of merchants, missionaries, and pirates, more fully illustrating the last named than the other two occupations. No other nation save Spain has written its autobiography in such glaring letters of blood.

When Ceylon was first acquired by the English, it was placed in the hands of the East India Company, being so intimately connected with India proper, of which that organization held control. In 1798, however, it became a possession of the English crown, and was confirmed to Great Britain by the Treaty of Amiens. The dominion of the Portuguese and the Dutch lasted for nearly the same length of time, each holding the island for about one hundred and forty years, both periods being characterized by innumerable conflicts with the natives and with foreign in-

vaders. The Portuguese, and especially the Dutch, left lasting memorials of their occupancy in the form of fortifications, churches, stone dwellings, and the like, which were so well built as to be still serviceable.

The rich pearl fisheries, and the native product of choice, much coveted gems, were constant allurements for the possession of the "resplendent island," causing the surrounding powers to regard it as a vast treasure house, upon whose possessors they cast envious eyes. On taking the island, as already intimated, England adopted prompt and efficient measures to fortify her possession in such a manner that no one has since cared to dispute her claim. In such matters the English have always pursued an omnivorous policy. (No spot of land seems too small or too insignificant to tempt their cupidity, and none too large for their capacious maw, — India, for example.)

As in the instance of Malta, also under British rule for so many years, Ceylon has thriven and prospered wonderfully, that is to say in a commercial point of view, which after all is the conventional test. Would that the same commendation might apply to the moral and educational condition of the Singhalese! However, where peace and plenty, together with seeming content, prevail, let us not seek for hidden troubles. The island is to-day indisputably a most flourishing agricultural colony, self-supporting,

except as regards the military establishment maintained by the home government, which expense is not justly chargeable to Ceylon, whose peaceable inhabitants require no military force to keep them in subjection. The simplest police organization accomplishes this, though in former times, under insufferable tyranny of petty princes and foreign invaders, the Singhalese proved that they could fight for, and hold their own against considerable odds. Unless outrageously oppressed, they are of too peaceable a nature to arouse themselves to open rebellion.

A simple glance at the situation shows great progress throughout the island since it came into the possession of Great Britain. Barbarous habits and institutions have been gradually reformed; taxes which were formerly exhaustive have been greatly modified, and in many instances entirely removed; from a condition of slavery, the masses have been made free, now enjoying entire personal liberty; the districts of the interior, heretofore inaccessible, have been open to easy and safe travel; compulsory labor has been abolished; education has been brought within the reach of all; large sections of territory have been drained, and brought from an unhealthy condition to one of comparative salubrity; mild and just laws are in operation; civil wars and foreign invasions have ceased, and a peaceful condition of every-day life is established. Such are some of the great improvements which have accrued under Eng-

lish rule. This statement is made as a simple matter of fact, not as an argument that England has a legitimate right on the island, any more than she has in India. But the prosperity of the Singhalese is no less a fact, and very pleasant to record.

The population of the island has more than doubled under the present dynasty, while its marketable products have quadrupled. A few pertinent facts occur to us in this connection which must surely interest the general reader.

There are now about three hundred miles of railway in operation on the island, and nearly as many more projected. To supplement this means of transportation there are a hundred and seventy-five miles of organized canal service, a legacy inherited from the Dutch. There are two hundred and fifty post-offices, besides forty telegraphic stations, in connection with which are sixteen hundred miles of telegraphic wire in position. In this march of progress the interests of education have not been entirely forgotten, and upon the whole, the Singhalese have very little to complain of as regards the government under which they live. Fate, however, has decreed that this people, as a nationality, shall gradually pass away and be forgotten, like other aboriginal races. The Alaska Indians are not more surely dying out than are these Singhalese. The most sensitive matter with them and with nearly all orientals is touching the sacredness of their religious rites. With these

the English government never interferes, neither here nor in India proper. As we have shown, the orientals are a peaceable race, and will submit to a considerable degree of arbitrary rule touching their political relations, but the moment their religious convictions and ceremonies are interfered with, they become frenzied.

It will be remembered that the great Indian mutiny, which occurred in 1857, was at first incited in the ranks of the natives at Cawnpore and elsewhere by what was thought to be an intentional insult to their religious convictions.

The English, soon after establishing themselves in Ceylon, tried the experiment of forming a battalion of infantry, composed of the natives. When being trained to service, it was nearly impossible, we are told, to teach them not to fire away their ramrods as the real missiles of destruction. There is a certain effeminacy inherent in all rice-eating nations, and yet what did not the former people of this island achieve in the building of great cities, grand palaces, and temples of stone? It would almost seem as though the Singhalese of the present day could not belong to the same race as the people who built Anuradhapura before Christ was born.

Many of the prominent Christian sects have churches and missionary establishments in the island. It has long been a popular missionary field with several denominations, more particularly in the north-

ern part. The most numerous is that of the Roman Catholic Church, whose leaders began their system of proselyting the natives as far back as the first establishment of the Portuguese in Ceylon. The faith which they presented addressed itself with all its theatrical effect to the fancy of the ignorant Singhalese, especially as the cunning priests took good care to mingle certain local Buddhistical ceremonies with those which they introduced. There are shrines and temples in Ceylon, in what are called Roman Catholic districts, where the images of Buddha and the Virgin Mary both hold honored places. Is the worship of one any more idolatrous than of the other? *no*
It has been well said that the idol is the measure of the worshiper. People who never thought for themselves were thus attracted. They formed a class whose very ignorance made them easy converts. Had they been able or inclined to reason upon the subject, it would not have been permitted. They had to swallow the creed as a whole, at a single gulp, being approached with the sword in one hand and the cross in the other.

Absolutism in faith is synonymous with ignorance. The right of inquiry is the privilege of every human being, though it is denounced as heretical by the Romish Church. Only falsehood fears investigation; only chicanery dreads the light. The hateful Inquisition tried to carry on its bloodthirsty practices here under Portuguese rule, but was summarily driven out

of Ceylon by the Dutch, with its vile nunneries and its instruments of torture. So the French, during their brief possession of the island of Malta, expelled a similar Jesuitical crew from Valetta, not, however, before they had recorded their diabolical deeds in letters of blood, now burning a "heretic," and now mangling an intractable convert.

CHAPTER V.

Food of the People. — Rice Cultivation. — Vast Artificial Lakes. — The Stone Tanks of Aden. — Parched Australia. — Coffee Culture. — Severe Reverses among Planters. — Tea Culture. — Cinchona Plantations. — Heavy Exportation of Tea. — Cacao Culture. — A Coffee Plantation described. — Domesticated Snakes. — The Cinnamon - Tree. — Cinnamon Gardens a Disappointment. — Picturesque Dwellings. — Forest Lands. — The Ceylon Jungle. — Native Cabinet Woods. — Night in a Tropical Forest. — Rhododendrons.

THE principal food of a nation is a most important factor, not only in judging of its means of support, but also as regards the mental and physical character of the people themselves. Rice has been the staple product and support of Ceylon, as it has been of the population of India and China, from time immemorial. There are to-day some eight hundred thousand acres of land devoted to the raising of this cereal upon the island; there should be twice that area devoted to the purpose, to meet the imperative wants of the present population. The unsuitability of the climate for ripening wheat is more than compensated for by its prodigal yield of rice, producing two crops annually, where water can be freely obtained. This grain is proven by scientific experiment to contain more of the several essential elements for support of the human body than any other which is grown. As is well known, in cultivating rice, it requires to be

flooded, started in fact under water, after being first planted, and also to be more than once submerged during its growth and ripening. To facilitate the production of this nutritious grain, the great tanks already referred to were originally built, in which to preserve, for periodical use, the water which flows freely enough from the mountain region during the rainy season, but when the dry period sets in, the rivers become thread-like streams, fed only by a few inconsiderable springs which exist in the hills. The oldest of these immense reservoirs is believed to date back some centuries before Christ's appearance upon earth, evincing by their construction a degree of organized thrift and effective energy hardly equaled in our time.

The tanks not only saved the precious water from running to waste, but, being tapped at suitable intervals, conducted it by sluiceways and canals, distributing it to those localities where it was needed, and at the exact time when it was wanted.

The chief article of native consumption should also be one of export from a country so admirably adapted to its production. - This is not now the case; indeed, it is and has long been one of the principal imports from India and elsewhere. It is estimated that every native adult who can get it consumes a bushel of rice each month in the year. To the Singhalese rice is what wheat is to the average American, namely, the staff of life. To promote its cultivation, the English

government should repair the neglected tanks, great and small. There is evidence sufficient to prove that Ceylon raised all she required of this staple for home consumption when her agricultural masses could get the necessary water. In some localities where the rain is plentiful, the rice planter is dependent upon the natural supply; but in most parts of the island its cultivation is not even attempted unless a certain artificial supply of water is first secured by means of canals and reservoirs, it being quite as necessary as the very seed itself. There is one great advantage which the planters enjoy in Ceylon over most other regions; that is, the abundance and cheapness of free labor obtainable at any season of the year. Coolies by the thousand are always ready to come hither from southern India at the harvest time. As many come regularly as can get employment.

When the island was at the height of its prosperity, there were in its various parts at least thirty tanks of enormous proportions, and about seven hundred of all sizes. In the nineteenth century, we attain the object of water preserves by building structures of granite, like the Croton and Cochituate reservoirs of New York and Boston, not nearly so large nor any more efficient than these of the time referred to. But to do this we have all the appliances of powerful machinery and labor-saving methods, while these Herculean results in Ceylon were achieved by human hands alone. One system is the consummation of a high state

of civilization, and of well-paid skillful industry; the other, like the enduring pyramids, was the outcome of a barbaric period, and of forced manual labor. While examining one of the vast embankments, built, like all others, partly of stone but mainly of earth, to securely hold the artificial lake, the author was accompanied by an intelligent native, who was a local official of the government. It was natural to remark upon the achievement of so great a work by primitive means. "Yes," said he, "every bushel of earth which forms this broad embankment, extending for miles, was brought by the single basketful from yonder mountain upon the heads of men and women."

The remains of one of these capacious tanks which stimulated industry and insured abundant crops in Ceylon so long ago is to be seen at Kalawewa, near Dambula, already spoken of, and is known to have been built fourteen centuries since. It was originally some forty miles in circumference, covering seven square miles, with a depth of twenty feet of water, and having an embankment of stone twelve miles long laid in solid tiers, with the large blocks ingeniously secured together. These tanks are found in a more or less ruinous condition all over the island, but especially at the north, where they were more required than in the southern portion. The conserving of water in large quantities for agricultural and other necessary purposes was naturally one of the earliest

developed ideas of civilized people. Aden, the important peninsula commanding the entrance of the Red Sea, now held and fortified by England, is situated in a rainless zone, so that the inhabitants see no fall of that invaluable element sometimes for two years together, though when it does visit them it comes in floods. The dependence here for the needed supply in the dry season is upon enormous tanks hewn out of the solid rocks with infinite labor, and connected with each other by a well-devised system. These tanks, being cut in the solid rock, as we have said, are virtually indestructible, and form the means of supply for the inhabitants to-day, as they did thousands of years ago. The great antiquity of the Aden water reservoirs renders them intensely interesting, since they are believed to be as old as the most ancient monuments in existence raised by the hand of man, — not excepting those of Egypt.

In entering the harbor of Aden, one passes through the dangerous Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, so called by the Arabs, and signifying the “Gate of Tears,” because it has proved so fatal to human life and to commerce. The author well remembers, when passing this famous point, seeing the tall masts of a big European steamship still standing above the water of the strait. A few days previously, the vessel had been swept by the treacherous currents upon some of the many sunken rocks, and had instantly gone to the bottom with all her crew on board.

The water preserves of Ceylon are of all sizes, from widespread lakes to mere ponds, designed to irrigate circumscribed districts. There was a time when each town and village, at least all that lay to the north of the mountain range which divides the island, had its reservoir. The first one spoken of in this chapter was built by King Penduwasa, and was restored by the English so late as 1867. It covers an area of over three thousand acres, and is of inestimable value to the agricultural interests of the district. It seems that as Egyptian monarchs were wont to build pyramids to mark the glory of their several dynasties, so the Kandian kings and earlier rulers of Ceylon each sought to excel his predecessor by constructing larger tanks, thus elaborating the means of irrigation and increasing the productiveness of the island. Sixteen of these useful reservoirs are credited to one of the latest kings of Kandy.

Could this grand and effective principle of irrigation be applied to the plains of Australia, what a blessing it might prove. The oft-recurring periods of drought, extending from Brisbane in the north to Adelaide in the south, are now a fatal blight to agricultural enterprise. The Murray River, which at certain seasons of the year is navigable for nearly or quite one thousand miles, now runs to waste, becoming a mere brook half the year; and sheep and cattle sometimes die of thirst by thousands, so that many wealthy Englishmen engaged in sheep-raising have

been made paupers in a single season. It only needs the construction of a series of water-saving tanks upon the course of the Murray to successfully water millions of acres of naturally fertile soil, and to insure the country against anything like a water famine when the dry season sets in. Why the people who are in authority ignore such simple facts is a standing marvel.

We have said that rice was the staple product of the island, and it is still so ; but it was not long ago that Ceylon was also famous for the amount of excellent coffee which it produced and exported. For a while, it seemed destined to rival all the rest of the world in this important article. Its cultivation was begun here upon a large scale in 1825, in the vicinity of Peradenia, where the soil and climate proved to be so favorable that speculators came hither in large numbers from great distances, but especially from England, to establish plantations, though the coffee-tree is not indigenous to Ceylon. Thousands of acres of forest and dense jungle were cleared and burned over in the neighborhood of Kandy alone, at great expense and labor, to prepare the ground for coffee planting. There was at one time so much speculative energy evinced in this direction that nearly every local government official was more or less engaged in it, embarking therein all the money which he possessed or which he could borrow. Well-engineered roads were opened into new and available districts,

while numerous substantial bridges were erected over previously impassable streams, and thriving villages sprang up as if by magic amid what was formerly wild and inaccessible jungle. In the course of twenty years, the product had risen to so large an aggregate figure as to astonish the commercial world, and the price of the berry was consequently reduced in all the markets of Europe. Such good fortune, it was finally discovered, was not destined to fall unalloyed to the share of the Ceylon planters.

Some sacrifice must attend upon all such enterprises. In clearing the forest lands for coffee planting, a most reckless waste was practiced in Ceylon. Magnificent groves of valuable wood were cut down and ruthlessly burned to ashes, among which were many of the precious cabinet woods so highly prized all over the world. Among others were some grand banian-trees, as we were told, which had a hundred great stems and a thousand lesser ones. There are not many such trees as these to be found in the known world.

It is but a few years since that a nearly simultaneous blight attacked most of the coffee plantations on the island, coming in the form of a strange fungus, which choked the breathing pores of the leaves, and thus rapidly exhausted the trees. The Ceylon planters were struck with consternation for a period; years of uninterrupted good crops had filled them with confidence, so they had annually, by liberal ex-

penditure, cleared more ground, spreading out their plantations in all directions. Large sums of money were sent out from England by individuals desirous to enter into so promising a speculation, and the aggregate sum said to have been expended in this purpose is almost incredible. But the blight proved to be of the most serious character, and was so wholesale as to literally impoverish many previously rich agriculturists who had embarked their all in the business. The island is very rich in fungi, and this one which had so effectually blighted the coffee plants was quite new to science. That which was for a time so serious a pecuniary loss to this island proved to be of great commercial advantage to Java and Brazil, whose production in the same line was vastly stimulated thereby, while the coffee which they sent to market realized more remunerative prices than when brought in competition with that of Ceylon. Since this experience, a large number of the planters have gradually turned their attention to raising tea, together with the production of quinine from the cinchona-tree, and so far as could be learned, they have met with good pecuniary success. An intelligent resident of Colombo estimates that there are fifty thousand acres of the last-named tree under profitable cultivation at the present time. It is found that cinchona will thrive in the mountain districts, considerably above the height at which coffee ceases to be advantageously cultivated, while, unlike tea or

coffee, it requires no special care after it has been once fairly started. The production of quinine, which has now reached mammoth proportions, hardly keeps pace with the growing consumption of the drug by the world at large. There was over one million dollars' worth of cinchona bark exported in 1892 from Colombo.

The export of tea in 1890 rose to the considerable amount of forty-seven million pounds, which aggregate we have evidence to show has been since increased annually. The commercial importance of Ceylon may be said to rest at the present time mainly upon the raising of tea. The yield per acre is considerably larger than it is in India, while the access to market is much better than it is at Assam or Cachar. The Ceylon product is shipped in its natural condition, that is to say, it is pure, while that of China and Japan is systematically adulterated and artificially colored. There are about two thousand plantations upon the island occupied for tea raising, averaging two hundred acres each of rolling upland, and it is confidently believed here that China and India will eventually be distanced by Ceylon in the matter of supplying the markets of the world with tea. While coffee cannot be cultivated successfully much higher than four thousand feet above sea level in this island, tea thrives at almost any height in this latitude, as it does in northern India, round about Darjeeling. The only fear seems now to be

that of over-production. The last year's crop was estimated to slightly exceed eighty million pounds, and its quality was so satisfactory as to command good prices and a quick market.

There are several special advantages which tea culture possesses over that of coffee; one is the ease with which the tea planter can get rid of any pest which attacks his trees. The coffee plant gives, as a rule, but one crop annually, the blossom season being narrowed to four or five weeks, and if that fails because of bugs or disease of any sort, the year's labor is in vain. In the cultivation of tea, there is the chance of plucking leaves nearly every month of the year. If an emergency arises, the planter has only to clear his bushes of every leaf and, gathering the same, burn them. The insects are thus totally destroyed, while the bushes are sure to produce a new covering of verdure in a few weeks. There are to-day nearly three hundred thousand acres devoted to tea culture in Ceylon.

The planters have been giving attention of late years to the raising of cacao, the chocolate plant, and some large plantations have proved to be very profitable, the demand being considerably beyond the present supply. The article produced here stands as the best in the London market, and commands the highest price. Over twenty thousand hundredweight were exported from Colombo in 1892. That of the year just past, we were assured, would show a considerable increase over this amount.

Let it not be understood that coffee is no longer raised on the island. The fact is that the blight spoken of seems to have in a considerable degree exhausted itself, and many coffee planters are again rejoicing over paying crops, as abundantly proven by the amount of the berry which is still exported. It may be almost doubted if there is any such thing as unmitigated evil; the brief though serious blight of the coffee plant in Ceylon has proved to be a blessing in disguise. Finite judgment is often delusive. Joseph's brethren, who sold him into slavery, meant it unto evil, but God meant it unto good. The equity of Providence has framed a never-failing law of compensation, though we may not always possess sufficient intelligence to see its application.

A coffee plantation is a charming sight at each stage of the ripening process. Its dark green polished leaves are beautiful examples of tropical foliage, and the white blossoms look like snowflakes gathered in clusters about the tips of the branches, emitting a perfume not so pronounced as, and yet not unlike, that of the tuberose. These odorous flowers are short-lived and drop to the ground almost as quickly as they come, being followed in due course by large crimson berries, quite as ornamental as the flowers and nearly as large as the common New England cherry. Within the pulp the double seeds are ripened which form the coffee berry of commerce. The view of a thrifty plantation at sunrise, when each

spray is dripping with refreshing dew and every little branch is diamond-capped, is lovely beyond expression.

A surprise awaited us on one occasion while visiting a coffee plantation near Kandy. Seeing a snake over four feet in length moving along unmolested on the path in front of the bungalow which was occupied by the planter's family, it was quite impossible to suppress an exclamation. Our host smiled pleasantly as he explained that the creature was not only tolerated about the house, but that it was a pet! It seems that these reptiles are often kept to kill and drive away the coffee-rats, as they are called, a certain species of rodents which are often alarmingly abundant on these estates, and terribly destructive to the growing crops. They are twice the size of an ordinary rat, such as is common with us. They feed upon birds, blossoms, and ripe berries of the coffee to an unlimited extent, if not interfered with. The snake is their natural enemy, and is more destructive among them than a well-trained domestic cat would be. In fact, these rats would be more than a match for an ordinary cat. So the fer-de-lance is a great rat destroyer among the sugar plantations of Martinique, a snake which is as poisonous as the cobra of Ceylon. Does the reader remember that it was one of this species of West Indian serpents which bit Josephine, the future empress of France, when she was a mere child in her island home, and that her faithful negro nurse saved the child's life by instantly

drawing the poison from the wound with her own lips? At Pará, in Brazil, the author has seen young anacondas six and eight feet long also kept upon the plantations as rat catchers. Any of these serpents make very little of swallowing a rat which they have themselves caught, but they promptly refuse such as have been killed by a trap or other means. The Ceylon cobra cannot cope with the mongoose, whose safety in a conflict with this reptile lies in its extraordinary activity. The mongoose avoids the dash of the cobra and pins it by the back of the neck, persistently maintaining its hold there, in spite of the creature's contortions, until it succeeds in gnawing through and severing the spine.

In Ceylon, ladies sometimes make a pet of the mongoose, and when taken young and reared for this purpose, the soft little hairy creature becomes as affectionate and lap-loving as the most tiny dog, recognizing its mistress above all other persons, and following close upon her footsteps. It looks innocent enough, but the cobra instinctively dreads its presence, and with good reason, for the encounter nine times in ten costs the reptile its life. The natives say that when a continuous fight occurs between these creatures, if the snake succeeds in fixing its fangs in the body of the mongoose, the latter instantly retires and eats of some plant as a preventive to the operation of the poison, and presently returns to renew the conflict until it finally conquers. Though this is a

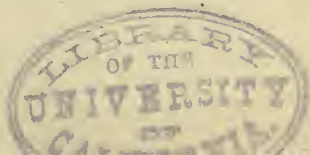
universally believed statement among the common people, we do not give it the least credit.

One other important and staple product of the island should not be forgotten. The cinnamon-tree is indigenous, and is largely cultivated for the valuable bark which it yields. It is estimated that over twenty thousand acres are systematically improved in the raising of cinnamon-trees, a very ancient as well as profitable industry in Ceylon, and one which was held as a monopoly by the Dutch government for a century and more. The monopoly was also maintained by the English, after they assumed control here, but this most unwarrantable embargo has long since been abolished, and it is no longer a restricted article. The tree is grown from the seed, begins to yield at about its eighth year, and continues to do so for a century or more. It does not require a rich soil, but thrives best in a low, sandy plain. A soil in which scarcely anything else will grow except chance weeds seems quite the thing for cinnamon, which, like the cocoanut palm, thrives best near the salt water. In its natural state, it grows to a height of thirty feet; under cultivation, it is pruned down so as to remain at about ten feet or less. It is of the laurel family, but is as hardy as the long-lived olive-tree. The author has seen in southern Spain, near Malaga, orchards of the latter in which were many trees which it was declared were several centuries old, their gnarled and scraggy appearance certainly favoring the statement.

The cinnamon gardens, as they are called, are generally musical with the cooing of turtle-doves, whose plump condition is owing to free living upon the nutritious purple berries of the spice-producing tree. The birds are not interfered with, as the berries have no commercial value, and it should be remembered that the natives do not kill birds or animals for food. Sometimes English sportsmen go into the plantations and get a bag of this palatable game, though it seems cruel to shoot such delicate and pretty creatures. Dove-pie, however, — this between ourselves, — is by no means to be despised, especially where, as in Ceylon, beef and mutton of a good quality are so rare.

On the occasion of the author's first visit to Colombo, the Cinnamon Gardens in the immediate suburbs were much lauded, and they were in fact one of the first attractions to which strangers were introduced. There was a pleasant promise in the very name, and we had anticipated something not only beautiful to behold, but which would prove grateful to all the senses. Disappointment was inevitable. Finally, when we reached the grounds, it seemed hardly possible that the broad area of low, scrubby jungle and thick undergrowth which bore this attractive name could really be the Cinnamon Gardens of which so much poetical fiction has been written. It seems rather an anomaly, but the fact is, clove oil is not produced by the pungent spice whose name it bears, but is extracted from the refuse of the cinna-

mon bark. The “gardens” referred to were misnamed. There was no garden about them. It was simply a plantation of thick-growing shrubbery, apparently much neglected. The spacious area is now improved by picturesque European residences, spacious domestic flower plats, and croquet grounds, carpeted with velvety grass. Flourishing fruit trees and nodding palms render the place attractive at this writing. While strolling or driving through a cinnamon plantation, — and there are plenty of them all over the island, especially in the south, — one seeks in vain to detect the perfume derived from the spice so well known. It is not the bloom nor the berry which creates this scent, but when the bark is being gathered at the semi-annual harvest, the aroma is distinct enough. The spice of commerce is the ground inner bark of the tree, the branches of which are cut, peeled, and dried in the sun. The harvests occur about Christmas and again in midsummer. By trimming the smaller branches the productiveness of the main portion is improved, and the pungency of the bark is increased. Cinnamon was the cassia of the Jews and ancients. Probably Solomon’s ships brought the much-prized spice from this island. The consumers generally did not know from whence it came, that was a royal secret, and much mystery hung about the matter, while the cost was at that period so high as to make it an exclusive article, — that is to say, it was only to be afforded by the rich.



The uncleared woodland of the island is very extensive. The forests must have been of much smaller area when the population was quadruple its present aggregate, particularly in the north, where the extensive ruins show how vast in numbers the population must have been. It is estimated by good authority that there are two and a half million acres of wild, thickly wooded country, which contain all the varieties of trees peculiar to the equatorial regions. It is difficult to overestimate the grandeur of the primeval forest of Ceylon, with its solemn arches and avenues of evergreen, its majestic palms, and tall tree-ferns shading silver lakelets. Every pond, large or small, is sure to be the resort of tall wading-birds and water-fowls. Presently we come upon a spot where the earth is flecked with golden sunlight, shifting and evanescent, sifted, as it were, through the gently vibrating leaves, softly gilding the sombre drapery of the forest. There is nothing monotonous in a tropical wood; individual outlines and coloring are in endless variety. The contrasts presented in a circumscribed space are infinite, while a never-fading bloom overspreads the whole. Now and again the eye takes in a ravishingly beautiful effect through the deep-blue vistas stretching away into mysterious depths. Pressing forward, we come upon a wilderness of splendid trees, running up seventy or eighty feet towards the sky without a branch, then spreading out into a glorious canopy of green. Would that we could fully

impress the reader with the unflagging charm of an equatorial forest. "You will find something far greater in the woods than you will find in books," said St. Bernard.

Professor Agassiz recorded the names of three hundred varieties of trees growing in the area of one square mile in a Brazilian forest. The same abundance and variety exist in Ceylon.

The beauty and value of the native woods of this island cannot fail promptly to attract the notice and admiration of the stranger. The calamander, ebony, and satinwood trees, familiar to us as choice cabinet woods, are conspicuous and ornamental, besides which there are in these forests many other valuable species. Externally, the ebony-tree appears as though its trunk had been charred. Beneath the bark, the wood is white as far as the heart, which is so black as to have passed into a synonym. It is this inner portion which forms the wood of commerce. The sura or tulip-tree produces a material of extraordinary firmness of texture, reddish-brown in color. It bears a yellow blossom similar in form to the tulip; hence its name. It is known in botany as *Hibiscus populneus*, so called because it has the leaf of the poplar and the flower of the hibiscus. The tamarind, most majestic and beautiful, yields a red wood curiously mottled with black spots, and when polished gives a glass-like surface, but it is too valuable as a fruit-bearer to be freely used for manufacturing pur-

poses or for timber in building. The halmalille-tree gives the most durable and useful substance next to the palm, and is specially adapted to the manufacture of staves for casks; indeed, it is the only wood known on the island which is considered suitable for this purpose. Cooperage is an important industry and a growing one here, as many thousands of casks are required annually in which to export cocoanut oil, not to reckon those employed for storing and transporting that most fiery liquor, Ceylon arrack. Considerable quantities of this intoxicant find their way northward to the continent of India.

The famous buoyant Madras surf-boats are built of this halmalille wood, in the construction of which no nails are used. The several parts are secured by stout leather thongs, the wood being literally sewed together with that article and with cocoanut fibre, wrought into stout, durable cordage. So great and peculiar is the incessant strain upon these small craft employed in an open roadstead that nails will not hold in such light constructions. A certain flexibility is required, which is best obtained in the manner described.

One tree is particularly remembered as we write these lines, a cotton-bearer, though the article it produces is only floss-like, and too short in texture for spinning purposes. It is, however, very generally used for stuffing sofas and chair cushions. This tree is deciduous; the leaves do not appear until after the

crimson blossoms have quite covered the branches, producing a very peculiar and pretty effect. When the blossoms fall, the neighboring grounds are carpeted in varied scarlet figures, giving a novel and lovely covering, surpassing the finest product of the looms. After the blossoms are gone, the bright green leaves burst quickly forth in prodigal abundance.

If one chances to be amid these shadows of the forest after nightfall, the scene is totally changed as well as the prevailing sounds that greet the ear. It is then that one hears the short, sharp bark of the jackals, the weird howl of migrating families of flying-foxes, the ceaseless hooting of several species of owls, — one of which is known as the devil-bird because of its uncanny scream, — the croaking of tree-toads and mammoth crickets, mingled with the frequent, distressful cry of some other night bird whose name is unknown, — it is heard but not seen. Through the vistas of the trees flashes of soft light as if from a small torch catch the eye; if it is low and marshy these are like moving balls of fire, doubtless caused by some electric combinations. The dance of the fireflies amid the thick undergrowth is confusing as well as fascinating. One seems to be in fairyland, and looks about for the figure of a sylphid floating upon a gossamer cloud, or a group of fairy revelers tripping upon the blossom-covered ground. Is it all reality, we ask ourselves, or a dream from which we shall presently awake?

The large, brilliant flower of the rhododendron is familiar to New Englanders as growing upon a bush eight or ten feet high. It is annually made quite a feature when in bloom in the Boston Public Garden, but in Ceylon it is much more ambitious, forming forests by itself, and growing to the proportions of a large tree, averaging from forty to fifty feet in height. In the vicinity of Adam's Peak this tree abounds, covering the abrupt sides of that famous elevation almost to its rocky summit, where it is crowned by the small, iron-chained Buddhist temple, thus fastened to secure it against the fierce winds that sometimes sweep these heights.

The prevailing color of the flowers is scarlet, but there are variations showing lovely shades of pink and cream colors. Those which grow at the greatest altitude seem to differ somewhat from the others, and are said to be peculiar to Ceylon, being sixty feet in height, with trunks nearly two feet in diameter.

This is but one among many of the tall flowering trees upon the island. The reader can easily imagine the beautiful effect of a broad mountain side covered with gorgeous rhododendron-trees in full bloom, so abundant that the very atmosphere seems to be scarlet with the strong reflection of the flowers. Like the superb sunset of the north, accompanied by the orange, scarlet, and fiery red of the twilight glow, were this mountain of rhododendrons to be literally reproduced by the painter's art, we should think it an exaggeration.

In the opening month of the year, this regal flower is in full bloom on Adam's Peak, and so continues until July, when it takes its winter's sleep. The green leaves of the species growing high up the mountain are silver-lined, while those lower down are brown on the under side. The former have also stouter stems, and are more stocky in all respects. The latter, to a casual observer, are more delicate in form and more beautiful in color.

CHAPTER VI.

Arboreal King of the Forest. — The Palm Family. — Over-Generous Nature and her Liberal Provisions. — Product of the Cocoanut-Tree. — The Wide-Spreading Banian. — Excellent Public Roads. — Aquatic Birds and Plants. — Native Fruit Trees. — The Mangosteen. — Spice-Bearing Trees. — Treatment of Women. — Singhalese Rural Life. — Physical Character of Tamil Men. — Tree Climbing. — Native Children. — Numerical Relation of the Sexes. — Caste as respected in Ceylon. — Tattooing the Human Body.

OF all vegetable nature, so abundant, prolific, and beautiful in this equatorial region, one most delights in the characteristic and ever-present palm, — arboreal king of the forest. Ceylon has seven very important varieties native to its soil, which are found in great abundance especially upon the southern coast of the island. These are the cocoanut, the palmyra, the kittool, the areca, the date, the talipot, and the fan palm. The latter member of this family, seen in greatest perfection at Singapore, is a conspicuous ornament which greets the stranger immediately upon landing, and its peculiar shape is almost constantly to be met with, go where one may upon that interesting island. It springs up from the earth with a comparatively short stem before the branches begin, unlike most other palms, presenting an appearance of an expanded fan, as though it were artificially trained to grow in this particular shape.

It reaches a height of forty feet or more, and forms a distinctive feature of the scenery. Its roots, like those of the asparagus plant, are small and innumerable, seeking sustenance by means of these tentacles which expand irregularly in all directions.

The fan palm is to be seen in California, but it is of inferior growth, and is not indigenous there. At the north of Ceylon, the palmyra palm prevails, while the south and southwest coast are literally lined with large and thrifty groves of cocoanut palms, the value of whose products is immense. The care and rendering of these gives employment and support to whole villages of natives. Unlike the date, the cocoanut palm bears male and female buds on the same branches. The last-named tree thrives best, and bears most fruit, when growing near the salt water, a peculiarity which does not apply specially to other members of this family.

It is a fact worthy of mention that the cocoanut palm, like the camel, is always found associated with man. There are no wild camels, and the cocoanut-tree does not flourish in the wilderness. It is most at home when its tall, smooth gray stem inclines gracefully, heavy with fruit, over some native, rudely thatched cabin, a picture which is constantly repeating itself in the southern part of Ceylon.

On first approaching the island, it is seen that the shore is palm-fringed from Dondra Head to Colombo, and even far north of the latter place. The pictur-

esque cocoanut groves come down close to the sea, from which they are separated only by a golden belt of yellow sand, over which the trees incline gracefully, with their broad, plume-like foliage half hiding the ripening clusters of russet-clad fruit hanging fifty or sixty feet skyward. The salt spray of the Indian Ocean impregnates the atmosphere when the monsoons blow, stimulating the palms to unwonted vigor and fruitfulness. So uniform is their growth along the level shore that the tall white trunks with their feathery crowns seem to stand in closed ranks like a line of soldiers at "parade rest."

The reason of the extensive geographical distribution of the cocoanut palm is doubtless from its growing in such close proximity to the sea. The ripe nut falls upon the shore and is floated by tide and wind to other islands and coral reefs, where in due course it propagates itself and in turn begets other seeds which seek new lands in a similar manner and there plant themselves. The small islets of the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific have thus become heavily wooded from chance beginnings, though it has required many ages to bring about the present conditions.

The cocoanut palm is to the natives of Ceylon what the date palm is to the Arabs of the desert. Its regular cultivation is one of the recognized industries. The nuts designed for planting are selected from the best which are produced, and are kept upon the tree

until they are thoroughly ripe, when they are placed in a nursery, partially covered with earth, and exposed to the sun. There they remain until a sprout shoots up from the eye of the nut, and when this reaches the height of nearly three feet, it also shows long, irregular roots hanging from the base. It is then planted in the ground at a depth of about two feet. The young tree grows very slowly for six or seven years, increasing more in stoutness than in height. Presently it starts afresh to grow tall quite rapidly, and by the eighth or ninth year it begins to bear fruit. Though the cultivation of this tree is so important, and ultimately so profitable, in equatorial regions that one would not think of its being neglected, still, owing to the length of time required to bring it to the fruit-bearing condition, the ever lazy natives do not expend much effort in the business. The long period between the seed and the product discourages them. Nature, however, steps in and fills the gap by the chance planting of many trees annually, and when these reach a certain growth suitable for removal, they are transplanted into advantageous situations. The new palms which are thus added yearly much more than keep good their numbers, as they are hardy and long-lived trees.

Thus it is that Nature is over-generous, and makes liberal provisions for her children in all instances. The camel has a foot especially designed for traveling upon the desert sands. Birds of prey possess talons

suitable for seizing, and powerful beaks formed for severing their natural food. The tiniest plant shows exquisite adaptation to the climate where it is placed. Animals of the Arctic regions are covered with fur adequate to protect them from the freezing temperature in which they live. The most barbarous tribes are not forgotten. Wherever we find them, their food and necessities are sure to be discovered close at hand. Examples might be multiplied by the hundred. Ceylon alone offers us confirmation which is irrefutable, few spots on earth being better adapted to supply the natural wants of primitive man.

A thoughtful person cannot fail to be impressed with the remarkable adaptation of the palm family to the requirements of the natives of this region. Take, for instance, the cocoanut-tree, and realize for a moment its bountiful, beneficent products. It affords never-failing water in an always thirsty clime. Nutritious and palatable cream is obtained from its luscious nut; toddy to refresh the weary traveler, or arrack when fermented, comes from the same source, besides a rich oil for various domestic uses. Thus we have five distinct products from the cocoanut-tree, while the wood of the trunk itself affords material for many uses. The oriental poet designates three hundred different purposes to which the palm and its fruit can be profitably applied. The green nut contains nearly a pint of cool, sweet water; cool in the hottest weather, if partaken of when it is first gathered from

the tree. The inner rind of the ripe nut, when reduced to a pulp, yields under pressure a cup of delicious cream. The toddy is sap produced from the buds thus divested, instead of permitting them to ripen and form the final nut. When it is first drawn, this liquid is pleasant and refreshing, like the newly expressed juice of the grape, or still more like Mexican pulque, produced by the American aloe, which is the universal tippie of the people south of the Rio Grande. By fermentation of the liquids obtained from the buds of the palm and from the stout stalk of the aloe, it becomes like alcohol, and is decidedly intoxicating. Cocconut oil, produced from the fully ripe and dried meat of the nut, is a great staple of export from Colombo and Point de Galle. Each cocconut-tree produces on an average from fifty to a hundred full and perfect nuts, yielding about a score the first year of its coming into bearing.

The cocconut palm is the most common and most valuable of this family of trees, and next to it is the areca. The top of the former always bends gracefully towards the earth, affording the Eastern poets a synonym for humility, while the stem of the latter is quite remarkable for its perfectly upright form. Undoubtedly the cocoa palm does thrive best where it gets the influence of the sea breezes tinctured with the salt of the ocean, but it is a mistake to suppose that this tree does not thrive inland in Ceylon. Some of the finest specimens to be met with are in the central

province of the island, between Kandy and Trincomalee.

The talipot palm is very marked in its nature, and is specially interesting to naturalists; fine specimens are to be seen all over the island. Its most remarkable peculiarity is that it flourishes about forty or fifty years without flowering; then it seems to arrive at maturity, blooms in regal style, yields its abundant seed, and dies, — the only vegetable growth known which passes through such a uniformly prolonged process of ripening and decay, not forgetting the misnamed century plant. The flower of the talipot is a tall, pyramidal spike of pale yellow blossoms, standing twenty feet above its heavy dark-green foliage like a huge military pompon. It is pronounced by botanists to be the noblest and largest flower in the world, and this is certainly so if we consider the whole clustering bloom as being one flower. The leaves of the tree when full-grown are large and of a deep green, but when young they are a pale yellow, and are then dried and used for writing upon. Leaves of the talipot have been measured in Ceylon which have attained the length of twenty feet, and they are used by the natives for the erection of tents. The author has seen in Brazil leaves of what is known as the inaja palm fifty feet long and ten or twelve wide.

The young leaves of the palmyra palm are also employed for manuscripts, or rather were until lately. They are prepared by steeping them in hot water or

milk, after which they are dried and pressed between pieces of smooth wood. The ancient Mexicans before Pizarro's time used the leaves of the aloe for a similar purpose. The talipot palm is the queen of its tribe.

The betelnut is the product of the areca palm, and resembles a nutmeg in shape and size. A couple of hundred generally form the annual yield of a single tree. Like the cocoanut or our American chestnut, the fruit grows inside of a husk, russet colored, and fibrous in its nature. Farther to the eastward, among the Straits Settlements, the areca palm is known as the Penang-tree because of its predominance in that well-wooded island, where human life exhibits only its most sensuous and lowest form, and where vegetation, fruits, and flowers revel in exuberance.

The banian-tree with its aerial roots is indigenous to Ceylon, flourishing after its peculiar fashion in all parts of the island. At a point on the coast about half-way between Colombo and Galle, there is a grand specimen of this self-producing arboreal giant. The road passes directly through its extensive grove, beneath its dense and welcome shade, which here forms a sort of triumphal arch. The author has seen but one other example of the banian-tree so large and fine in effect; namely, that of world-wide fame in the Botanical Garden just outside of Calcutta, under the thick foliage and branches of which a whole regiment of infantry might comfortably encamp. The age of the banian is incalculable. It multiplies itself so that

it may be said in one sense to live forever. Many centuries of age are claimed for this tree in the south of Ceylon.

Speaking of the road between Colombo and Galle, too much praise cannot be bestowed upon these government thoroughfares. Whether on long or short routes, they are admirably and substantially constructed, consequently they are easy to keep in good order. The island has over three thousand miles of made roadways in an area of twenty-five thousand square miles. "The first and most potent means of extending civilization," says a modern pioneer, "is found in roads, the second in roads, the third again in roads." The best thoroughfares in the neighborhood of our New England cities are hardly equal to these. The Ceylon public roads would delight Colonel Pope, of bicycle fame; he who so eloquently and none too earnestly advocates the great importance of good common roads, especially in New England, where we are, when the truth is fairly spoken, sadly deficient in them. The new States of the West and Southwest far excel us in this respect. The road on which we have just embarked, aside from its excellence in point of usefulness (the railway from Colombo to Galle was not completed when the author traveled over the route), is one of ideal beauty, passing through a forest and shore region combined. This turnpike abounds in unique effects and a succession of charming surprises. One is never quite prepared for the

natural tableaux which constantly present themselves. An experienced traveler in the low latitudes is apt to anticipate the probabilities when starting forth on a new tropical route, but one must behold in order to properly understand the nature of Ceylon forest scenery. The Colombo and Galle road forms an almost continuous avenue through overarching cocoanut palms, with frequent glimpses of the Indian Ocean on one side and of fresh-water ponds and small lakes on the other, the latter all alive with aquatic birds, such as water-pheasants, plovers, teal, sand-larks, and the like. The "painted snipe," as it is called, is very common, having a chocolate-colored head and a white collar, with back and wings of green, the tail feathers being spotted with yellow like a butterfly's wings. It is a very active bird and is never quiet for a single moment, constantly teetering when upon its feet while seeking for red worms in the sand. A very similar bird is often seen on the salt-water beaches of New England, which resembles this Ceylon example in shape, size, and habits, but not in the texture of its feathers. The American bird also called snipe is of a uniform pale lavender color. It is shy enough on our coast, but its tropical brother is as tame as a pigeon. These places are teeming with blossoms, — pink lilies, bearing broad, floating, heart-shaped leaves whose roots are securely anchored to the bottom. Some of the plants resting so serenely on the glass-like surface have short, deli-

cate white roots, and receive their nutriment only from the air and water, not coming in contact with the earth at all. Others, with insect-inviting petals, close promptly upon the victims allured to their embrace and digest them at leisure, thriving marvelously upon this animal nourishment. Any agency which tends to diminish the myriads of flies and mosquitoes is an assured blessing.

When a native hut is seen, it is found scarcely to equal the anthills in neatness and solidity of construction. Close by the cabin the always interesting bread-fruit-tree rears its tall head, abounding in its large pale green product, which forms a never-failing natural food supply. It is a notable member of the fruit-bearing trees of these latitudes, and is next in importance to the cocoa palm, with its serrated, feathery leaves, and its melon-shaped product. The bread-fruit weighs on an average ten pounds each, and often attains double that weight. It is as fattening to cattle as the best Indian meal, and the natives relish it, but to a European the bread-fruit is not palatable. The tree grows about fifty feet in height, and requires but very little attention to insure its welfare. Plenty of bananas, the big jack fruit, mangoes, and plantains give altogether the appearance of an abundance for the support of life. As regards the valuable and, to the native, indispensable jack-tree, it is strongly individualized, not only because it yields the largest of all edible fruit, but also in the fact that the massive

product grows out of the body of the tree, and not, after the fashion of other fruits, upon the small limbs and branches. Nature has made a special provision in behalf of this tree. As it grows older and the fruit increases in size, it is produced lower and lower on the trunk each year, until from being grown near the top, it springs out close to the ground. Though the short, rope-like stalk which holds the rough, green-coated fruit is of strong fiber, still, when in ripe condition, it is apt to fall to the earth. As the product increases in size, it would be broken to pieces if it fell from any considerable height. The natives apply themselves to its consumption with unlimited capacities. The wood of the jack is much used for lumber, being easily worked, and presenting a good surface even for common house furniture as well as for lighter bungalow framework. Supporting timbers, however, must be made from harder wood, so as to resist the inroads of the vicious ants. The humble native tenement has a frame made from the tough, golden-stemmed bamboo, which is to a casual observer apparently very frail, but is nevertheless found to be extremely flexible, tenacious, and lasting. Where the bamboo branches intersect each other, they are securely bound together with thongs made from palm-tree fibre; this is to secure them in position.

For a long time the luscious mangosteen was thought to be peculiar to the islands of the Malacca Straits, but it is now found thriving in this garden-land of

Ceylon, having been long since introduced from Penang. Attempts to domesticate it in southern India have proved unsuccessful. The same may be said of the fragrant nutmeg, which has become an article of profitable export from the island, though it is not indigenous here. Along this turnpike road we occasionally pass small cinnamon plantations, where the process of cutting and peeling the bark is going on, considerable quantities being exposed and spread out in the sun, whose intense heat dries it most rapidly. When labor of any sort is in progress, even in the wet rice-fields, it will be seen that the women perform the hardest tasks. In fact, this is to be observed in town and country, both in domestic affairs and in the open field, especially in the transportation of heavy burdens, which they carry on their heads.

Making beasts of burden of women is not alone practiced in Ceylon. It is also shamefully obvious in many European centres, where civilization is supposed to have reached its acme. Americans who have traveled in Germany, for instance, have often experienced disgust at the debasing services required of the sex in that country. The author has seen women, in Munich, carrying hods of bricks and mortar up long ladders, where new buildings were being constructed, while hard by their lords and masters were drinking huge "schooners" of lager beer in taprooms, and lazily smoking foul tobacco.

Loitering beneath the shade of the trees contiguous

to their cabins, queer family groups of Singhalese natives watch the passing stranger with curious, questioning eyes. Clothes are of little consideration in a climate like this, and consequently nudity is the rule. The preparation of food is intrusted mainly to Nature, whose bountiful hand hangs ripe and tempting nourishment ever ready upon the trees, where all are free to pluck and to eat. It is curious to see how easily a native man or boy, with a rope of vegetable fibre passed round his thighs and thence about the trunk of a palm, will, with feet and hands thus supplemented, ascend a cocoanut-tree eighty feet or more, to reach the ripe fruit. He moves upwards as rapidly as one might go up a tall ladder. It is true, the rope sometimes fails, a broken neck follows, and a fresh grave is required to decently inter the remains. This is said to be one of the most "fruitful" causes of fatal accidents in Ceylon. This sort of catastrophe, and poisonous cobra bites, are almost as frequent and deadly in the island as electric car accidents are in Boston or New York.

As one regards these lazy, betel-chewing, irresponsible children of the tropics, idling in the shade of the palms, it does not seem strange that they should lead a sensuous life, the chief occupations of which are eating and sleeping. All humanity here appears to be more or less torpid. There is no necessity to arouse man to action,—effort is superfluous. The very bounty of Nature makes the recipients lazy,

dirty, and heedless. They live from hand to mouth, exercising no forecast, making no provision for the morrow. It is the paradise of birds, butterflies, and flowers, but man seems to be out of place; he adds nothing to the beauty of the surroundings; he does nothing to improve such wealth of possibilities as Providence spreads broadcast only in equatorial regions. Bishop Heber's lines alluding to Ceylon were certainly both pertinent and true: "Where only man is vile."

We were just now speaking of native family groups observed on the route between Galle and Colombo, which is a thoroughly typical region, and may well serve as a truthful picture of such scenes all over the southern district of Ceylon. They would form admirable subjects for photographic delineation, — a gratuitous suggestion for the modern Kodak enthusiast.

The children of eight or nine years, who form a portion of these groups, are as naked as when they were born, while their parents are as scantily clad as decency will permit. The boys and girls have large, brilliant, and intensely black eyes, with a strong promise of a good degree of intelligence, but their possibilities are doomed to remain unfulfilled amid such associations as they are born to. A few more years and they will subside into languid, sensuous beings, like their progenitors. They do but obey their polarity, — the "cherubim" of destiny ought to

be designated by a harsher name. The men wear a white cotton cloth wound about their loins. The women have a similar covering, sometimes adding a short, cotton, jacket-like waist. The children have monstrosously protruding stomachs, like the little darbies of our Southern States, but yet as a rule they seem to be well and hearty. The women of the Tamil race, especially, are of good form and features, much handsomer than the Singhalese of the same sex. It is a notable fact in this connection that there are fewer women in Ceylon than men, a circumstance which has furnished a weak argument for some native writers in favor of polyandry, which is still sanctioned in the central districts. In the island of Malta, this relative position of the sexes is entirely reversed.

The Tamil men are of good height, slim, with small limbs yet well formed, and have pleasing features and bronzed skins, very similar in hue to our North American Indians. The Singhalese are of a darker complexion, not so light in figure; they affect European dress, adding much ornamentation. They hold themselves of a superior class to the Tamils, engaging only in what they consider a higher line of occupation. The Tamils form the humbler and laboring population of the country. They fully recognize the distinction between themselves and the Singhalese proper, and they are universally called coolies. Caste is never disregarded among them, its infinite ramifications extending through all degrees and classes of the

people, regulated by universally accepted ideas. This peculiar system was early introduced into the country from India, but was previously unknown here. It is difficult for the uninitiated to understand its real import. There are twenty or more castes rigidly adhered to, which may be rendered in numerical order of importance as follows: The husbandman's occupation comes first in dignity, followed by that of the fisherman; goldsmiths rank as third, blacksmiths as fourth caste, and so on in the following order: braziers, cinnamon peelers, washermen, barbers, potters, tom-tom-beaters in the temples, etc. Domestic intercourse between persons of different castes is inadmissible, and to marry below one's caste is considered to be disgraceful. Feelings of intolerable pride on the one hand and of abject humiliation on the other are thus created and perpetuated. In each caste the children must follow the occupation of the father; a carpenter's boys must be carpenters, and his daughters must marry carpenters. Caste is therefore absolute death to all promptings of ambition, according to native ideas. No one can hope to rise above the grade in which he is born, and no one makes the attempt. Nearly a century of English control has only served to confirm these Asiatics in the thralldom of caste. How could it be otherwise when the ruling power is itself a slave to the same idea? Sir Matthew Arnold says: "Aristocracy now sets up in our country a false ideal, which materializes our upper

class, vulgarizes our middle class, and brutalizes our lower class."]

Both men and women among the natives in town and country are often tattooed on their arms, legs, and bodies, while a few, but this is rare, are decorated on their faces. A child less than ten years of age was seen in the Pettah at Colombo, whose body was absolutely covered with crude designs fixed indelibly by this process. One could not but imagine how the little fellow must have been made to suffer during the worse than useless operation, which is, even to a hardened adult, little short of slow agony. This instance struck the author as being the more remarkable because the Singhalese and almost all savage or semi-civilized races are found to be remarkably kind to their offspring, even as wild animals are. We are compelled in some degree to qualify this assertion, since the missionaries tell us that in certain parts of the island female infants are often destroyed at the time of birth. If this is the case to any considerable extent, it would account for the statistical fact that the men largely outnumber the women in Ceylon. It is difficult to believe, however, that this practice prevails in our day. With some barbaric tribes, religious significance is attached to the habit of tattooing the human body. This is the case in New Zealand, and in the islands generally of the South Pacific. Among the former, professional tattooers go about from tribe to tribe with rude but effective instru-

ments, and operate upon the Maoris, male and female, with great adroitness and considerable artistic skill.

There is perhaps no other such universal practice as that of tattooing which prevails among semi-savage races in various parts of the globe, but especially among the South Sea Islanders. Many tribes, never brought in contact with each other, seem to have originated the idea among themselves.

CHAPTER VII.

Experiences between Colombo and Point de Galle. — Dangers of Encountering Reptiles. — Marvelous Ant Houses. — Insect Architects. — Curious Bird's Nests. — Flamingoes at Rest. — Variety of the Crane Family. — Wild Pea-Fowls. — Buddha's Prohibition. — Peculiar Wood-Notes. — Mingling of Fruit and Timber Trees. — Fatal Parasitic Vines. — Stillness of the Forest. — Superstitions of the Natives. — Snake Bites. — Railway Facilities.

AMID all the charms of this interesting, palm-embowered route between Colombo and Galle, there are some serious drawbacks to be encountered, which as a faithful chronicler the author must not forget to mention. All mundane enjoyments are qualified. One meets inevitably with an aggressive army of beetles, ants, land leeches, dragon-flies, cock-chafers, locusts, wasps, ticks, and vicious spiders, these last endowed with an immense superfluity of hairy legs, while the omnipresent and persistent mosquito exhibits its unwonted activity. Indeed, ants, mosquitoes, and sand-flies literally feast upon the wayfarer, until the entire surface of his face and limbs becomes excoriated. How the natives with their exposed bodies exist under such circumstances is a mystery. The redundancy of insect and reptile life is wonderful in equatorial regions, but as regards the mosquito, where is this pest not encountered? The author has met

and suffered from them at the far north on the very glaciers of Alaska during the short summer months, and in the extreme south near the Antarctic Circle, in the East and in the West, on sea and on land. Of course they are perennial here like the foliage, and viciously tormenting.

We often heard stories of fatal bites from scorpions, centipedes, cobras, and other reptiles, but our own experience goes to show that they are naturally inclined to avoid human beings. It is true that repulsive insects and reptiles are to be looked out for. One is careful to examine his shoes before putting them on in the morning, and to take a few precautions of that sort. Cleanly houses do not harbor them, though they do sometimes annoy the traveler in the public rest-houses where he is often compelled to pass the night.

In the thickly wooded districts, the ants' nests are pyramidal in form, and five feet high, being constructed with even more uniformity than human hands could produce. Inside, they are divided into broad passageways, square halls, and store-rooms, to produce which divisions, so as to make them both accessible and convenient for the purpose designed, requires mental calculation, the possession of which we hardly accord to insects. Mere instinct could not insure such results as are here exhibited. Ants, like bees, live in thoroughly organized communities, and are found by naturalists to be divided into laborers,

soldiers, and food providers, all presided over by a recognized chief in authority. On a warm, dry morning, any attentive observer may see the white ants in the neighborhood of their hills bringing out their eggs to warm them in the direct rays of the sun. In proper time, before the dew falls, they are carefully returned to their original place of deposit. The natives understand that there will be no rain when the instinct—or reason if you will—of these minute creatures leads them to expose their eggs to the influence of the sun's rays. As barometers, these little insects surpass the most accurate instrument which human intelligence can construct.

The interminable feuds and furious wars of the ant tribe are a curious study in the tropics, where they would be an intolerable pest were their numbers not daily reduced by various destructive agencies. It is a provision of nature among animals and insects that a war of extermination is constantly in progress among them. The stouter animal preys upon the weaker. Birds, beasts, insects, and fishes, all are cannibals in one sense. Just so among the barbaric tribes of Africa, New Zealand, the Fiji Islands, Australia, etc.: the natives, since time was young until very lately, have made war upon each other when their food supply ran low, in order to secure prisoners, whom they roasted and ate.

In these thick woods along the coast, curious nests of unfamiliar birds also catch the eye, securely fixed



among the pendulous orchids and creeping ferns. All is so new to a northerner that he is on the watch for every typical object which may present itself. He does not fail to mark the nest of the tailor-bird, the little creature which ingeniously sews leaves together to suit its purpose, and that of the weaver-bird with its tunnel-like entrance; both are common in the district which we are describing. The nest of the grosbeak is remarkable, being two feet long, and composed of finely woven grass as strong as the texture of common straw hats. It is shaped like an elongated pear, and suspended at the extreme end of a branch, swinging back and forth in the wind. The entrance is at the bottom, so as to render the nest secure against the attacks of snakes, monkeys, and other enemies. Sometimes a score of these nests are seen in the same tree. There is also a species of wasp whose architectural proclivities are displayed in the building of stout, pendant nests five feet in length. Low down among the undergrowth, say five feet from the earth, there are colonies of spiders, whose webs are nearly as strong as pack-thread, absolutely barring the way in some places among the dense wood. Coming upon an open glade, a wild peacock is seen. He exhibits no fear of our presence, but flaunts his feathery splendors with all the self-sufficiency of conscious beauty. Farther on, we see pretty specimens of the bird of paradise. Now the land becomes low and marshy, and a broad lake

glistens in the sun. Here are plenty of water-rail, blue kingfishes, and metallic dragon-flies, the latter skimming over the still water, daintily touching the surface now and again. Hereabouts the woods and open glades are crowded with bird life. Storks, cranes, ibises, herons, pelicans, and flamingoes abound in the low, wet grounds, marshaling themselves in long files, like trained bodies of men, along the shore of the fresh-water ponds. The flamingo is called the English soldier-bird by the natives because of its habits, and its pink epaulets, which tip the body joints of its otherwise snow-white wings.

The effect is indeed ludicrous when a dozen or more flamingoes, each standing quietly upon one leg, with its head folded beneath its wing, seem to be sleeping in that manner. A wide-awake sentinel is always posted in a commanding position to give warning should an enemy approach. If the cautionary signal is given, all rise in the air together, and flying low, trail their long, stilt-like legs stretched far behind them. The legs of the wading species of birds are not graceful appendages. Most of the feathered tribe have a decorous way of gathering their limbs up close to their bodies when they launch upon the wing. This would, however, be obviously impossible in the long-legged tribe to which we have referred. The varieties of the crane family are almost numberless, from the largest, which stands five feet in height, down to others not taller than a duck. The

water-pheasant, white as the paper upon which we are writing, is a little beauty about the size of a dove, and may often be seen standing upon the broad lotus leaves pecking at the seeds. Do they, too, like human lotus-eaters, seek oblivion and exaltation through the subtle narcotic thus imbibed?

Now and again we come upon a bevy of pea-fowls quietly feeding among the ferns, plump and beautiful creatures, mottled with white spots upon a glossy, slate-colored ground, and nearly as large as our average domestic fowls. In some parts of Ceylon, they are found in very large numbers, and as the natives do not disturb them, they are comparatively tame. We had our suspicions that an occasional Singhalese stretched his conscience sufficiently to kill and devour a pea-hen. Though according to his religious faith the Buddhist may not himself sacrifice life, he may eat what has been killed by one of another creed. "From the meanest insect up to man, thou shalt not kill," says the first commandment of Buddha. It must be admitted that the injunction is very closely heeded. The fact is, the natives do not crave meat in this hot climate, and it is easy to see that with an abundance of excellent fruit and vegetables, supplemented by an occasional meal of fresh or salted fish, the diet of the common people is wholesome and sufficient. As repeatedly shown, religious instinct protects animal life among the Buddhists, but why an exception is made in regard to fish, it is impossible to

explain. We have met rigid Buddhists, however, who would not eat fish, — conscientious men, to whom the life in the sea was equally sacred with that found upon the land.

As regards the meat brought from the forest and jungle by European hunters, the average native has no compunction in eating of it, and is the grateful recipient of boar or bear carcass for food purposes, as he has not himself infringed upon the sacred injunction not to take the life of any creature.

As we wend our way among the thick vegetation and shadowy trees, the wood-pigeon's soothing, droning notes fall upon the ear like the melody of a human mother lulling her infant babe to sleep. Now and again the jungle-cock shouts his defiant reveille in a startling fashion, breaking the almost solemn silence. The unpleasant squeak of the flying-frog occasionally grates upon the senses, a creature so called on account of its remarkable ability of springing from one tree to another. It is of a rich, light green color, and very poisonous. The author had never heard of this creature until it introduced itself by means of the unpleasant croaking sound which it sends forth, very similar to that produced by the action of a rusty door-hinge.

While noting these things, it was for the first time learned that the peacock is a most destructive enemy of the snake tribe, to which reptiles he has an inveterate antipathy, — why or wherefore, no one knows.

He pecks out the snake's eyes, in spite of his fangs. The favorite food of this gorgeous bird is said to be the white ant, which so abounds here; a happy provision, whereby the multiplying of this insect pest is in a measure checked. One is prone to query what the white ant was created for. Perhaps it was to eradicate some mightier and unknown curse. *Quien sabe?*

The white ants are the most extraordinary creatures of the formican tribe. Their dwellings are more than a thousand times higher than themselves; were human beings to construct their edifices upon the same relative scale, we should live in houses six thousand feet in height. These ants are like small white slugs in appearance, and are said to be delicious eating. Certain low castes in Ceylon use them as articles of food. A voracious modern writer describes them as tasting like sugared cream and white almonds. One could get accustomed to these things, no doubt, but gnawing hunger would have to be the accompanying sauce to tempt most Europeans to even taste this peculiar dish of the tropics. Are not snails sold in Paris and London as a table luxury? Much travel has cured the author of fastidiousness in regard to food, but he draws the line at snails, ants, and caterpillars.

There are many peculiarities which strike one in a tropical forest, affording strong contrasts to ours of the north, not only in the nature of the products, but

also in the seemingly incongruous mingling of various species of trees. We have pine forests, oak forests, cedar, birch, and maple woods; but in the low latitudes, fruit and timber trees abide together in utmost harmony. It would be a singular sight in New England if we were to find peach or apple trees bearing after their kind among a forest of oaks, or cherry and plum trees producing their fruit in a pine grove. In a Ceylon jungle, the banian and the palm, the bread-fruit, banana, satinwood, calamander, mango, and bamboo, tamarind, and ebony, mingle familiarly together. This is a peculiarity born of the wonderful vegetable productiveness of the equatorial regions, which seem to give indiscriminative birth to fruits and flowers, wherever there is sufficient space to nourish their roots and to expand the branches.

Each one of these tall forest trees, so various in species and so thrifty in growth, serves to sustain some other vegetable life, mostly in the form of creeping, clinging plants. Scarcely one is seen in the jungle without its dependent of this nature, and many of them are rendered extremely lovely by rich festoons of blossoms, which they bear in profusion, reminding one of the clusters of blue and purple wistarias so common in our country. A forest tree wreathed with golden allamandas, when seen for the first time, is a new and never-to-be-forgotten revelation of beauty, forming a towering mass of bloom. Nature is a charming decorator. Her sweet combinations never

outrage the most delicate, æsthetic taste ; art may imitate, but it cannot rival her. Orchids, ferns, and the most exquisite mosses in myriads of shades abound, all struggling for space to expand their gorgeous beauty, while blossoms of scarlet, lilac, and purest white festoon the tallest stems. The loftiest forest trees are rarely without examples of these often lovely parasites, adhering to and drawing life from their abundant vitality. About some of the largest trees, plain, stout vines, with rich leaves but bearing no flowers, are also seen entwined from base to top, binding the trunk upon which they cling like a huge piece of cordage or a ship's hawser. These vines, as they grow from year to year, tighten their clasp upon the trunk of the tree, slowly but surely choking it, until the circulation is stopped, so that it finally gives up the struggle for existence, withers, and dies. In the mean time, the fatal vine gradually takes the place of the original tree, fattening upon its decay, itself, after the lapse of years, to be displaced in a similar manner. It is an inevitable rule that the parasite shall finally end by throttling its adversary, or rather we should say its victim, like the Indian Thug, who embraces only to kill. Thus the process of death and renewal in the vegetable kingdom goes on through the centuries in these lonely, undisturbed wilds.

The wonderful stillness which reigns in some portions of the dense forests of Ceylon is such that one

can hear the tick of the watch which he carries, — a silence which presently becomes almost oppressive, putting one on the very tiptoe of expectation as to what startling outbreak may possibly happen. When a gentle breeze sweeps past, the agitated leaves whisper to each other, while one strives to understand what they say in their arboreal tongue. If, by chance, the uncanny screech of the devil-bird is heard under such circumstances, your native guides will quickly hide their eyes in their hands, for, according to their credulous theories and superstitions, they believe if they see a devil-bird it is the forerunner of all manner of misfortunes, among other catastrophes signifying sure death to themselves within a twelve-month. This feathered pariah is an owl-like creature, and seldom puts in an appearance in the daytime. The natives have a proverb expressing the idea that to meet with a white crow or a straight cocoanut palm is equally unfortunate, but the fact is, neither is ever seen. Many of the local axioms, and there are myriads of them, are of a similar character, pronouncing a penalty as sure to follow upon a supposed, but really impossible, occurrence.

The growth of parasitic vines, to which we have referred, is not by any means confined to Ceylon. It is observable to a certain extent on the St. John's River, in Florida, and the neighboring wooded districts. The author has seen similar instances in the forests of the King's Country, as it is called, in New

Zealand, where the native tribes maintain a quasi independence, though they are really subject to England. Here the development of the destructive vines is very pronounced and curious. After ascending a tree by means of an anaconda-like embrace, the vine continues to stretch out its length so as to clasp the branches of the next nearest tree, descending its trunk by the entwining process to the base. Thence it proceeds to climb the next nearest stem, and so on, until the woods are rendered impassable by this insidious, swift-growing vegetable cordage, forming, with the undergrowth, a jungle only penetrable by wild animals.

It is in such jungles in Ceylon that poisonous reptiles do much abound, especially where the land is of a marshy nature, and these places are always avoided, even by the Singhalese themselves. Local statistics show that a hundred and fifty natives, on an average, lose their lives annually by snake-bites. Few white people are thus sacrificed, they being naturally less exposed. The native, inland, has no covering for his feet and legs, while the Europeans are always protected in these parts of the body, so that if attacked, the poisonous fangs of the serpent rarely penetrate the skin. The bite of a cobra is said to be harmless if given through woolen clothing, as the texture absorbs the virus, besides which the fangs of the reptile under such circumstances are not liable to penetrate the skin of a white person.

In connection with this typical route between Colombo and Galle, we have spoken of the railway, which has for some time been gradually stretching from the capital southward. Probably before these pages reach the public eye, this long-needed road will be in running order between the two cities, passing through Mount Lavonia, — the comparatively cool and pleasant summer resort, — Morotto, Panadura, Kalatura, Bentola, — famous for its oysters and as being the half-way station, — and so on, through the several shore settlements to Galle. This will doubtless prove as profitable a road as that between Colombo and Kandy, which paid its entire first cost out of the profits in a few years after its completion, besides making good its full interest account. It should be added that there was no “watering” of the stock after our American style, a shamefully deceptive and dishonest system, which has made so many millionaires richer, and the average citizen poorer, in our own country.

The study of tropical flora and fauna is intensely interesting to a lover of nature. Let us not, however, presume too far upon the reader’s patience, but hasten to tell him of Colombo, the capital of this Indian isle, together with its people and its attractive surroundings.

CHAPTER VIII.

Colombo, Capital of Ceylon. — Harbor Facilities. — The Breakwater. — Exposed to Epidemics. — Experiences on Landing. — Hump-Backed Cattle. — Grand Oriental Hotel. — Singhalese Waiters. — Galle Face Hotel. — An Unusual Scene. — Number of Inhabitants. — Black Town the Native Quarters. — Domestic Scenes. — Monkeys. — Evil Odors. — Humble Homes. — The Banana-Tree. — Native Temples and Priestly Customs. — Vegetables and Fruits. — Woman's Instinct. — Street Scenes in the Pettah. — Fish Market.

POINT DE GALLE, situated seventy miles nearer to its southern extremity, was the principal port of Ceylon from time immemorial, until the English government turned the open roadstead of Colombo into an excellent and safe artificial harbor, by erecting an extensive breakwater. It is one of the most successful conceptions of the sort ever consummated in the East, and was begun in 1875, — the Prince of Wales laying the corner-stone, — and completed in 1884. This was an improvement which had long been imperatively demanded, but which had been deferred for years on account of the serious impediments which presented themselves and the heavy expenditure which it involved. Previous to the construction of the breakwater, at certain seasons of the year it was nearly impossible to effect a landing at Colombo, owing to the boisterousness of the sea on this part of the coast during the prevalence of the southwest

monsoons. The surf-beaten shore of the Coromandel coast at the north is scarcely more exposed than was the open roadstead of this port. In the shipment or discharge of freight, it constantly ran the risk of being ruined by salt water, the service being necessarily performed by means of scows or lighters. The well-built breakwater has nearly remedied this trouble. It is about a mile in length, constructed of solid blocks of concrete, averaging twenty-five tons each, and rises upon a firm foundation to a uniform height of fifteen feet above low-water mark. The outermost end is capped by a lighthouse, and is curved inward almost at right angles with the main line of the work, thus forming a shelter for the anchorage of shipping. It is now proposed to place a similar structure on the opposite or north side of the bay, leaving a suitable entrance to the harbor. This would render the anchorage quite smooth in all weather, and as safe for shipping as the Liverpool docks. When the southwest monsoon is in full force, the water breaks over the present line to a height of forty feet, falling in harmless spray on the inner side. The thorough and substantial character of the construction may be judged of by its actual cost, which was between three and four million dollars. The entire work was performed by convict labor. The area sheltered from the southwest monsoons is over five hundred acres, half of which has depths varying from twenty-six to forty feet at low

tide. The breakwater forms an excellent promenade except in rough weather, and is much improved for that purpose by the people who reside in the neighborhood. Having good anchorage space, sufficient depth of water, and a sheltered harbor, Colombo is now the regular port of call for the great steamship lines sailing to and from China, Japan, the Straits Settlements, Australia, and Calcutta, and is justly entitled to the name of the commercial as well as the political capital of Ceylon. In the long past, it has shared the former honor with Point de Galle.

There is no tropical island, or indeed any part of the Orient, which has a more prompt and frequent mail service than has Colombo, a highly important consideration with people who, aside from business connections, desire to keep in touch with the world and the times.

Like Malta, the island is so situated between the East and the West as to be exposed to any epidemic which may prevail in either quarter, and which is easily brought by vessels touching here for coal or freight. The author heard nothing of quarantine provisions or regulations enforced at Colombo, but there is doubtless some official supervision of this character. All persons who have traveled extensively have encountered more or less annoyance from quarantine regulations, especially as enforced throughout the East, but all experience shows their necessity.

We landed at Colombo on Christmas day, our bag-

gage — after a mere pretense of examination on the part of the custom-house officers — being promptly put into a two-wheeled, canvas-covered bullock cart, beside which we walked with open umbrella, for the direct rays of the equatorial sun were almost unbearable even at this season of the year. It was observed that the driver of the small, dun-colored yoke of cattle attached to the cart used no whip, and he was mentally commended for his humanity. This, however, was premature, for it soon appeared that he had an ingenious and cruel device whereby to urge his oxen forward. The fellow twisted their tails vigorously, which must have been intensely painful to them, as they showed by their actions. Not being able to speak Singhalese, the author promptly applied the same treatment to the driver's ears, an argument which required no interpreter, and which proved to be both convincing and effectual. It was afterward discovered that the tails of many of the oxen here were absolutely dislocated from this brutal process, used by the drivers to urge them forward. Though a Singhalese's religion forbids his taking the life of the meanest insect, it does not seem to prevent his torturing these really handsome and useful animals. There is one way in which these mild-eyed, hump-backed creatures occasionally assert themselves which is somewhat original, and commands our hearty approval. When they are overtaken and abused beyond endurance, they are liable to lie down in the

middle of the roadway, and nothing will start them until they choose to get up and proceed of their own will. So the overladen camel lies down upon the desert sand, and will not rise until his burden is properly adjusted.

While wilting in the enervating atmosphere, as we pursued our way from the shore, the thought naturally suggested itself that just then, on the other side of the globe, our friends at home were probably sitting before cheerful soft-coal fires and quietly enjoying the genial heat and the enlivening blaze. It was also remembered that Colombo is acknowledged to be the hottest city in the Queen of England's dominions. The sun was far too bright and intense for unaccustomed northern eyes, and it was a great relief to reach the shelter beneath the broad piazza of the hotel, though it is but a short distance from the landing. We were waited upon at the Grand Oriental with an intelligent and discerning regard for a traveler's comfort, and assigned to large, cleanly apartments. The rooms were divided from each other only by partial partitions, which did not reach the ceilings, the upper portion being left open for the purpose of promoting ventilation. So intense is the heat in Colombo at times that this is quite necessary, though such an arrangement does not permit of the degree of privacy requisite for a sleeping apartment. The hottest months at this point are February, March, and April, when all who can do so escape to the hill district.

The Oriental is an excellent and spacious hotel, containing over one hundred sleeping-rooms, with ample retiring apartments on the first floor and a dining-room which will seat three hundred guests at a time. A line of arcades is connected with the house, beneath the shade of which one can go shopping at the little gem and curio stores. The hotel is built about a large central court or area, which is well filled with thrifty tropical vegetation. The whole is admirably arranged, and is well kept after American and European ideas. While the guests sit at meals in the large dining-hall, long lines of punkas or fans, suspended over the tables, are operated by servants placed outside of the room, thus rendering the atmosphere quite endurable, notwithstanding the intense heat which generally prevails. The waiters were found to be natives, but all spoke English, and were well trained in the performance of their duties. Each one of them wore a white turban, and a single white cotton garment cut like a gentleman's dressing-gown, and confined at the waist by a crimson sash. The legs and feet of these copper-colored servants were bare, after the conventional style of such persons throughout this island, as well as in India proper.

One other large house of public entertainment has a good reputation, and is certainly most favorably situated. It is known as the Galle Face Hotel, adjoining the popular esplanade of the same name. This house is well patronized, especially by officers of the army

and navy. For a permanent residence it is perhaps preferable to the Oriental, on account of its charming maritime outlook. There are several other public houses, but of these two the author can speak approvingly from personal experience.

An unusual scene, which transpired on the esplanade near the Galle Face Hotel, occurs to us at this writing : —

One of the bullock gigs, so common in Colombo, stopped suddenly before that hostelry. The driver, who had jumped to the ground, was examining the animal with much surprise. In the mean time, the bullock was staggering like a drunken man, reeling hither and thither while striving to keep upon its feet, shaking its head strangely in a wild sort of way, and trembling all over. The thermometer was somewhere between 95° and 100° Fahr. A score of idle and curious natives thronged about the spot, entirely shutting out the circulation of what little fresh air there was stirring. At this moment a cavalryman from the barracks hard by made his way into the crowd, and seizing the bullock's nose he bade the driver hold him steadily by the horns. Taking a knife from his pocket, the new-comer forced the animal's mouth open and adroitly made a deep incision in one of the bars which form the roof, instantly causing the blood to flow freely therefrom. After the lapse of a very few minutes, the bullock recovered, standing once more quite firmly upon its feet, as soon

as the pressure upon its brain was relieved by the flow of blood. The creature had experienced an attack of what in horses is called blind-staggers, produced by a rush of blood to the brain, undoubtedly occasioned in this instance by the great heat and by over-exertion. The cavalryman's readiness with his knife produced just the sort of relief which was required in such an exigency.

"The bullock could not have been driven very fast," said an English lady, who had regarded the scene intently from the piazza of the hotel, "because it does not perspire at all; see, its hide is perfectly dry."

"That sort of hanimal does n't sweat only on the nose," said the cavalryman, as he coolly wiped his knife and returned it to his pocket, adding, "'Orses does, but hoxen does n't."

It is a noticeable fact that European horses cannot endure the climate of Ceylon; some which are imported from Australia manage to give satisfaction for a limited period. The breeding of these animals is not a success in the island, and the natives do not use them at all.

Colombo has a hundred and thirty thousand inhabitants, and is divided into what is known as The Fort and Black Town, the former being the portion devoted to the official quarters and the residences of the English, the latter mostly to the very humble homes of the natives. Black Town is quite oriental and very dirty, dispensing a most unmistakable odor like a

faint tincture of musk. It stretches along the harbor front for more than a mile, until it ends at the Kalani River, and contains a most heterogeneous mingling of races, each individual decked in some distinctive garb of his original nationality, the majority, however, exhibiting only the bronzed skin covering to their bones which nature provides. Even these nude figures form an anomalous sight, often having their heads covered with monstrous, elaborate white turbans, and only a thin piece of cotton about their loins. The houses, or cabins as they would more properly be called, are of one story, dingy and poor, generally constructed of mud upon bamboo frames, with a thatched roof of dried palm leaves so braided together as to make a stout and secure protection from the rain. The fronts of these simple houses are quite open, revealing all sorts of domestic habits incident to native life, and very often outraging one's sense of propriety. Men or women care nothing for publicity, and do not hesitate in the conduct of affairs which are strictly of a personal nature.

If one desires a remedy for over-fastidiousness, let him stroll for a while about this native portion of Colombo. He will open his eyes in surprise now and then, but it is astonishing how soon one becomes indifferent to the most peculiar local customs, whether in Samoa, Japan, or among the Alaska Indians. The lazy Singhalese or Tamil men lying half asleep upon the ground, the women, semi-nude, cooking fish

over a brazier in the open air, and a group of naked children playing in the roadway, form a common tableau in this quarter of the town. Every necessity seems to be provided for by the salubrity of the climate and the spontaneity of the soil. Enterprise, emulation, ambition, are to these people unknown incentives to action. The height of their desire is plenty of sleep and plenty to eat.

The scene is occasionally varied by a group of men sitting upon their heels and absorbed in gambling for small sums of money. It should be stated here that the natives, Singhalese, Tamils, Moormen, or of whatever tribe, are all inveterate gamblers; only the Chinese can equal them in this propensity to risk all they possess upon the cast of the dice, or in betting upon some other trivial game. We were told of instances where the gambler, having lost everything else, staked the possession of his wife against his opponent's money, and, losing, the woman quietly acquiesced in consummating the arrangement. Women of the humbler castes are looked upon more as slaves than as filling any other relation to those whom they call their husbands. As a rule, they would not think of asserting any will of their own. As their husbands are abject slaves to the idea of caste, so they are slaves to their husbands, and however roughly they are treated by them, they take it quite as a matter of course. In the southern part of the island especially, each village has its cock-pit and its gam-

bling-den ; while hard by is the drinking-cabin, where for a few pennies a native can get very drunk on arrack.

At some of the low-thatched cabins in the Pettah, or Black Town, we see a tame parrot or a pet monkey confined within certain bounds by a small chain. If the former, he is likely to be imitating the boisterous exclamations of the children ; if the latter, finding no mischief possible, he sits chin in hand, with a ludicrously grave expression on his too human features. The ever-present crows take good care to keep out of the monkey's reach, but perch familiarly and fearlessly anywhere else about the cabins. There are several varieties of monkeys in the island. The black wanderoo of Ceylon with white whiskers comes nearest in its resemblance to the human face. He stands three feet high, and weighs between seventy and eighty pounds, being remarkable for muscular strength. The lower and the upper jaw are in a direct line with the forehead, while most of the race have projecting jaws.

The streets and environs of Constantinople are rendered hardly more disagreeable by the presence of mongrel curs than is Black Town, Colombo. Dogs abound, thoroughly useless creatures, which should have been born jackals, and which are perhaps partly breeds from that source. They are melancholy, half-starved, wretched, and mangy creatures, sleeping all day, and prowling about at night in search of some

stray bit of carrion which has escaped the vigilance of the crows. Why they are tolerated no one can say, neither does any one acknowledge their ownership. Occasionally one runs mad, causing by his bite a half-dozen natives to do likewise, when death is certain. Hydrophobia is never cured, not even by the devil-dancers of Ceylon. The normal appearance of these dogs is that of abject fear, as they move about with heads drooping and their tails pressed close between their hind legs. A harsh word sends them off at top speed, while a kind one brings out their instinctive fondness for the human race. Still, they are nuisances in Ceylon, and of no earthly good to any mortal.

Evil odors are inseparable from the native quarters. That goes without saying, and it is surprising that pestilence does not run riot here. Dirt and contagious diseases certainly thrive in the same atmosphere, and yet one often sees sanitary laws, as we construe them, deliberately outraged without any such results as our best reason would lead us to expect. The author was in Rio Janeiro not long since, at a time when the yellow fever was proving fatal to fifty or sixty persons daily. In the Plaza Don Pedro Second, numbers of idle, lazy fellows lay half drunk, or wholly so, sleeping on the benches under a vertical sun. Some were quite unconscious, even lying upon the damp ground. Apropos of our remark that these people were inviting the fever, an intelligent resident,

who was our companion, calmly answered: "Yellow Jack does not choose that class for its victims. They seem to enjoy complete immunity from the pestilence." Seeing was believing, but it was also confounding to one's sense of the eternal fitness of things.

Generally, the scenes and experiences are not quite pleasant as presented to the stranger who visits Black Town, Colombo, for the first time. As he becomes more familiar with the surroundings, however, a picturesque aspect, a depth of rich brown shadows and bits of vivid color, unite to form a pleasing and attractive whole.

Adjoining each of these humble homes which line the thoroughfares, or perhaps just in the rear of them, one is sure to find clusters of bread-fruit, banana, and mango trees, often dominated by a tall, gracefully bending cocoanut palm of columnar proportions. The product of these several fruit-bearers goes far towards feeding the inmates of the cabin, about which they also cast delightful and much-needed shade. Nothing is more ornamental under such circumstances than the large, drooping, pale green leaves of the generously yielding banana, contrasting with the golden yellow bunches of the ripe fruit. The nutritious properties of the banana are far in excess of any other known vegetable food. African explorers have told the author that in an emergency, when threatened with famine, they have sustained life and strength for themselves and their

followers upon two bananas a day for six consecutive days, all the time engaged in the hardest sort of foot-travel through the pathless forest. The banana-tree renews itself annually, growing to a height of ten or twelve feet, and bearing heavy clusters of from sixty to a hundred individual fruits, green at first, but golden in hue when ripe. After bearing its fruit, the tree wilts and decays like a cornstalk, but in due time again springs up from the roots to bear another annual luxuriant crop. One clever writer tells us that the banana is "the devil's agent," because the abundant food supply which it affords, demanding so little of man in return, is a promoter of idleness. It is asserted that one acre of these trees will yield as much nutritious matter as sixty acres of wheat, which seems almost incredible. In many countries this fruit is the staff of life, flourishing as far as thirty-five degrees south and thirty-eight north of the equator.

There may be poverty here, — it is to be found nearly everywhere if sought for, — but there is no abject want visible, for these Singhalese homes are all surrounded by plenty. The mere physical support of life seems abundantly provided for, however the moral conditions may strike the careful observer.

Is it not a singular provision of nature that where vegetation is most thrifty, where fruits and flowers grow in wildest exuberance, elevated humanity thrives the least?

A very humble class of Moormen, Malays, Singhalese, and Tamils, together with Syrian Jews and the like, a mixed and motley population, constitute the larger portion of the community in the Pettah, but there are some buildings, shops, bazaars, and residences of a better class than those we have described. Such are mostly occupied by Parsees and Moormen, so that Black Town is not quite so "black" as might seem to the casual reader. The Moormen wear an impossible sort of hat, tall and brimless; others have sensible, broad-brimmed panamas, and some don the picturesque fez so universal in the East. The sienna-colored Singhalese proper are descended from the early conquerors of the island, the dark-brown Tamils from later invaders who came from southern India, and the copper-colored Moormen from the Arab merchants who came hither to trade for spices many centuries ago. The Singhalese have long, straight, black and silky hair, and are nearly always bareheaded. The Tamils as invariably wear turbans. According to the rules of caste, the Singhalese, being superior, has a right to go bareheaded, a privilege which is not allowed to the Tamils. This absurdity is on a par with the average rules relating to caste as enforced in India and Ceylon. Of the rights recognized under the system, none is more jealously guarded than that of carrying an umbrella to shield the bearer from the fiery heat of the sun, or the pitiless down-pour of equatorial

rains. In the olden times, in Kandy, only royalty and the priesthood were allowed the privilege. To the average foreigner in continental India and Ceylon, the arbitrary rule of caste seems to be the merest nonsense possible to conceive of, but to the natives it is a matter of most serious consideration, and is rigidly adhered to in all their daily relations with each other.

Here and there one comes upon a Buddhist or Hindu temple, and now we pause before a Mohamedan mosque. Each sect is eminently devout after its own fashion, and all are at liberty to follow the dictates of their own consciences. Two of our party having thoughtlessly entered one of the Hindu sanctuaries without removing their shoes, great indignation was expressed by some natives near at hand, and for a few moments it really appeared as though a downright fight would ensue. However, peace was restored at last by complying with the custom of the place, and promenading daintily through the temple in our stockings. Additional backsheesh was also awarded to the custodian of the shrine to pacify his wounded sensibilities. Before we left the spot, everybody was quite serene. To the author, the most curious part of this experience was that our little party wore their hats through it all, no objection being made. European etiquette demands of one to uncover the head as a mark of respect on special occasions, but the barbaric, or rather the

oriental fashion, is to uncover the feet. There are many curious points of difference in symbols of respect. The Tamil covers his head with an ample turban out of deference to those of a higher caste, while the Singhalese proper would not think it respectful to wear anything upon his head in the presence of a superior. A Chinaman lets down his braided pigtail as a mark of respect to those above him in rank, or as a token of reverence in the temple, while a Singhalese twists his braid into a snood at the back of his head, and secures it by a shell comb, for the same purpose.

The display of vegetables and fruit offered for sale on improvised benches or tables outside of the cabins, forming groups vivid in color and novel in shape, is interesting to a stranger. The collection includes pumpkins, sweet potatoes, oranges, pineapples, mangoes, guavas, and bananas, together with zapotas, rose-apples, limes, yams, and many other varieties. They are often arranged upon broad leaves, fresh and green, which impart to them a refreshing air of coolness. Some large, handsome bunches of grapes were observed, for which a high price was asked (thirty cents per pound). These came from the northern part of the island, on the peninsula of Jaffna, where they are raised in small quantities. Ripe oranges in Ceylon have a queer habit of reaching that palatable condition while quite green externally. They are very sweet, having a thin skin and plenty of juice, together

with a flavor equal to those of the Indian River district in Florida, and superior to those of California. Prices are very moderate ; a large ripe pineapple costs twopence, and half a dozen oranges are sold for the same sum. Statistics show that between nine and ten thousand acres are devoted to the raising of pineapples in Ceylon, where they ripen to great perfection. The little open-air shops are called "caddies," and are always presided over by native women, who, under an air of oriental indifference as to whether you purchase their wares or not, are yet exercised by suppressed eagerness to have you do so. A few of these simple caddies were observed to be prettily decorated with wreaths of myrtle, yellow flowers, and wisps of sweet lemon grass, hung on either side of the fruit, dispensing an exquisite fragrance which dominated all the offensive odors of the locality. This arrangement betrayed a woman's hand, prompted by a certain delicacy of fancy and an eye for natural beauty. There always exists this half-effaced charm within the bosom of the humblest of the sex, whether in Crim Tartary, the Sandwich Islands, or the Parisian boulevards. The surroundings are kaleidoscopic in effect, composed of contrasting races, bronzed men in white turbans, native women very nearly nude, queer physiognomies, busy itinerant salesmen, boisterous children covered only by their copper-colored skins, mingling with native domestic servants in fancy dresses of red and yellow, and bejeweled nurses, sent by their Euro-

pean mistresses to purchase some favorite fruit. The scene is constantly shifting, and the combinations rapidly changing. Every fresh visit to this portion of Colombo reveals some new phases of oriental life, which are often recalled to the mind's eye when one is far away and compassed by very different surroundings.

Native women pass and repass, bearing upon their heads broad, shallow baskets full of ripe fruit or vegetables, on their way to the English portion of the town, while other itinerants offer dark brown edible cakes made from mysterious sources. The great weight which a Singhalese or Tamil woman can carry on her head is something marvelous, far exceeding that of an Irish laborer's hod of bricks or mortar borne upon the shoulder. The humbler class of Eastern women all practice this mode of transporting merchandise from the period of their early childhood, hence their steady upright pose when walking, whether bearing any burden or not. An Egyptian, Indian, or Singhalese woman who had a quart pitcher of liquid to convey any distance would not carry it in her hands, but would place it on the top of her head for safety and convenience. As a rule, the men do not carry burdens upon their heads, but when transporting merchandise, they wear upon their necks and shoulders a sort of yoke with protruding arms, upon which a couple of stout baskets hang, balancing each other, and containing the goods. One Tamil woman

was noticed with a bevy of paroquets for sale, so tame that they crept about her head, arms, and shoulders, being occasionally treated to some favorite tidbit from her lips. She formed a pretty picture with her mottled green pets, an evidence also of what kindness and gentleness will accomplish.

The admirable display of fresh fish in the market is of great variety in shape and color, testifying to an abundant food supply afforded by the neighboring waters. Six hundred kinds of fish have been catalogued by scientists as being found on this coast. The river fish are of poor quality.

Doubtless the reader has heard of the "climbing perch," a tropical fish which is partially amphibious, and which abounds in Ceylon. It can make its way over the land for considerable distances in search of the nearest water-course, when its native pond becomes dry. There is also another eccentric piscatory creature here known as the "burying fish," which, when the water subsides, makes its way down into the muddy bottom of the lake or pond, where it hibernates until the rain again furnishes it with its natural element, — a veritable "fish story," but we were assured of its truth. At Batticaloa, the capital of the eastern province, there is a lake in which "singing fish" are found. Over these aquatic curiosities scientists have held many interesting sessions. What with burying fish, climbing perch, and singing fish, Ceylon would seem to have rather more than her just share of piscatory curiosities.

- When the dry season sets in and the watercourses cease to flow, the Ceylon elephant deliberately digs himself a well in the sandy bed of the rivers, using for the purpose both his ivory grubbers and the horny toes of his forefeet. Digging a few feet downwards generally brings water for the quenching of the huge animal's thirst. Unerring instinct (superior to human reason) guides him in selecting the proper spot in which to dig his well, to which he returns daily, and when the season of drougth is prolonged, he sometimes deepens it. When the severity of a Norwegian winter exhausts all other sources of food supply for the herds, the deer dig with their forefeet deep through the snow to reach the reindeer moss upon which to browse. They make no mistake in selecting the right spot, but always find the moss where they dig. The most experienced owners of the herds would be puzzled to indicate the proper places to seek the moss beneath the deep snow.

In contradistinction to all oriental ideas and the eternal fitness of things, while we watch the passing show of native life, our ears are saluted by the discordant notes of a bass drum, a bugle, and a fife. Presently there comes into view a score or less of Europeans of both sexes, the men wearing a sort of uniform cloth cap, and the half-dozen women, poke bonnets. Of course they represent the Salvation Army. How sadly out of place they seem to be here! These "missionaries," as they call themselves, have

never been known to make a proselyte from this brown-skinned people, so far as we could learn, while they are generally regarded by the Europeans as a class who have taken up with this craze as a last resort after having exhausted all other means in their endeavors to obtain a living without working for it. Still it must be admitted that there never was a fad or folly, however absurd, without some honest disciples, — weak, but conscientious advocates.

CHAPTER IX.

The English Part of Colombo. — Army Reserves. — Ceylon an Independent Colony. — “A Paternal Despotism.” — Educational Facilities. — Buddhism versus Christianity. — Public Buildings. — The Museum. — Domestic Dwellings. — Suburb of Colpetty. — The Lake of Colombo. — A Popular Driveway. — A Sunset Scene. — Excursion to the Kelani Temple. — The Jinrikisha. — Current Diseases. — Native Jugglers. — Hypnotism. — Houdon, the French Magician, astonishes the Natives. — The Thieving Crows.

IN that part of Colombo known as the Fort, and situated south of the Pettah, the English have spacious and well-arranged barracks, of sufficient size to accommodate five thousand men of all arms. Of course, no such force is required in Ceylon, and there are not such a number of troops here at the present writing. The island is peaceful enough, but the object of the British government is to maintain here, as well as at Malta, a body of disciplined men ready for immediate service, and especially prepared to reinforce the army of India in case of an emergency. The judiciousness of this precaution was well illustrated in 1857, when this station, from its small military force, afforded such material aid at the outbreak of what the English call the Indian mutiny, before alluded to.

This island, though it is a British colony like India, so near at hand, is quite separate from it in governmental organization. Ceylon is presided over by a

governor appointed by the Queen of England, who is aided in his official position by an executive council and a small legislative body of fifteen or twenty individuals. Some one has called the government of Ceylon "a paternal despotism." All ordinances are submitted to the approval of Her Majesty before they become registered law. The island is divided into provinces, each governed by a civil servant, having under him a staff of European and native assistants. The Roman-Dutch law, so termed, is the law of the island in all cases not otherwise provided for. The government furnishes means for the education of the rising generation, in the form of free schools, which advantage, though not universally improved, is yet reasonably successful. This is particularly commendable when it is remembered that the government of England has remained far behind other civilized countries in cultivating the intelligence of her people at home. It was not until so late as 1870 that she entered upon a system of free schools for the masses. The natives of Colombo are shrewd enough, in many cases, to see material good in giving their children regular school instruction, though they have not themselves enjoyed such a privilege. In this connection it is well to speak of St. Thomas' College, which is situated in the northeast suburb of the capital, about a couple of miles from the Grand Oriental Hotel, close by Christ Church Cathedral. This college is near the shore, in a most healthful and airy



location, the suburb being known as Mutwal, where the Kelani River enters the sea. Here, between two and three hundred young men, composed of Singha-
lese, Tamils, and the descendants of Portuguese and Dutch colonists, are in constant attendance. Close at hand there is also a high school for girls, admirably conducted, whose educational advantages are availed of by a goodly number of natives.

Here let us diverge for a single moment.

Secular education is the true and only available missionary among Asiatic tribes. Honest and experienced religionists are beginning to see and admit the correctness of this conclusion. The preaching to them by various Christian sects of very contradictory tenets of faith confuses these simple people, who are still often shrewd enough to detect broad inconsistencies, as well as to analyze and reason concerning missionary efforts among them. They say very logically to those representatives who are sent from America or Europe: "We are agreed here upon Buddhism. When you Christians can agree among yourselves as to which of your many doctrines is the right one, it will be time enough for you to try to teach us to discard a faith which our fathers have believed for thousands of years." More than one intelligent Singha-
lese has expressed himself to this effect in our presence. We leave it to the reader if these people are not perfectly logical in their position.

Who can wonder that confusion inevitably arises in

the simple mind of a native of this Indian isle, who attempts to reconcile our multitudinous sects and schisms?

We were speaking of the English portion of Colombo, which consists of a few broad streets shaded by thrifty tulip-trees, an official residence known as Government House, the long line of barracks already referred to, a cathedral, a clock-tower (serving also as a lighthouse), a club-house, hospital, some indifferent shops, two or three banking establishments, a public library, and three or four large hotels. The Colombo Library is situated on the corner of Queen Street, and contains some twenty-five thousand volumes. Its facilities are freely shared by strangers as well as by the citizens. The lighthouse referred to is a hundred and thirty-two feet above sea level; that on the end of the breakwater is a trifle less than forty feet. The former shows a triple flash at brief intervals, visible at night some twenty miles at sea. Among its ancient buildings, much interest centres upon the Dutch church, and its curious old graveyard.

There are no less than six newspapers published in this circumscribed community; two are in Singhalese, one in Tamil, and three in English. We do not imagine that they have much of a circulation, and yet unless they were self-supporting they would not probably be issued. Type-setting is cheap in Colombo, and the quality of the paper used is inexpensive.

The Museum of Colombo is a rather handsome and quite substantial two-story building, situated near Victoria Park, which was formerly a part of the famous Cinnamon Gardens, originally planted by the Dutch. The collection of curiosities in the museum embraces a large number, which have been found mostly upon the island, and includes many interesting specimens of preserved birds, together with large and small native animals and beautiful shells. There are also some literary and historical treasures relating to Ceylon preserved here, among which is a rare collection of palm-leaf manuscripts, both in Pali and Singhalese, bound after an original fashion. The edifice, which was built in 1877, is pleasantly situated, and surrounded by well-arranged, cultivated grounds. The entrance is free to all.

Near the Colombo terminus of the Kandy road is the pleasant public resort known as the Gordon Gardens, named in honor of Sir Arthur Gordon, a former governor of Ceylon. This area was his personal gift to the capital in memory of the jubilee of Her Majesty's reign. The gardens are rendered very attractive on each Friday afternoon by the performance of a military band; free outdoor instrumental concerts are also given every week on the Galle Face.

A few of the better class of dwelling-houses in Colombo are finished externally in stucco, all having the inevitable and indispensable broad veranda. Surrounding these homes honeysuckles, crimson hibiscus,

azaleas, cape jessamines, oleanders, and other flowering plants abound, with here and there little rocky mounds of lilies, cacti, and low ferns; while the familiar palms, mangoes, and bananas always make their appearance somewhere on the premises. Tennis courts give an English look to the surroundings of the bungalows. The unfortunate prevalence of dampness often proves very destructive inside these picturesque residences. There are seasons when books and papers, if exposed, are so seriously injured that they decay like ripe fruit. Boots and shoes become mouldy in a single night, and other articles are similarly affected.

Colpetty is the name of a very attractive suburb of the capital, intersected by finely macadamized, level roads, which are kept in admirable condition, running beneath shady bamboos and bending palms, where the delightful fragrance of flowers is always present. Here a small colony of Europeans have made for themselves delightful tropical homes, half hidden by the abundant vegetation behind beautiful shade trees where swinging hammocks and low music tell of delicious idleness and restful ease. If you pass through the embowered ways of this district after nightfall, your path will be lighted by glow-worms and fireflies, just as phosphorescence illumines the darkness upon the waters traversed by a ship's hull. It is the bedtime of the flowers, but their fragrance lingers in the atmosphere and affords the

most careless participant sensuous delight. Here, as in many tropical regions, the bungalows bear curious individual names, such as : Whist Bungalow, The Rotunda, The Snuggery, Monsoon Villa, The Rainbow, Storm Lodge, Palmyra Cottage, and so on. A similar custom prevails in the West Indies.

In a small front yard of a bungalow at Colpetty, a few climbing vines of the old-fashioned pink, purple, and white morning-glory greeted the eye like the smile of a half-forgotten friend. How familiar and suggestive they were in their sweet simplicity, One thrifty vine had found lodgment upon a tall Norfolk Island pine, clinging upon its singularly uniform branches, and making altogether a most delightful combination of color. In the same inclosure were several tall trees of the bell-shaped, white datura, the large flowers depending in great profusion, as beautiful to the eye as they are poisonous to the palate.

The unending night concerts of the ground and tree frogs in this vicinity are marvelous for the aggregated noise they produce. At the expense of calling down anathemas from the good friends whose hospitality we enjoyed there, it must be added that this croaking was almost unbearable ; worse, if possible, than the symphony and variations of the tuneful mosquitoes.

The large, fresh-water lake formed by the Kalani-Gunga, which, on its course from the hills to the sea, covers nearly a hundred miles, straggles about the

town in irregular lines, so that at one point it very nearly joins the sea. This river has been crossed at Colombo for many years by a bridge of boats, which has several times been carried away by the turbulent stream during the season of floods. A substantial iron girder roadway has lately been added to facilitate travel. The old bridge is formed by a score of boats firmly anchored, stem and stern, in a straight line, and supporting a platform laid upon crossbeams, which is fastened to the boats. The roadway is about five hundred feet long, the river being nearly that width at the point where the boats are placed. In olden times, there was a regularly established ferry here, but the bridge of boats has served transportation to better purpose for many years. There are now few rivers of any importance upon frequented routes in Ceylon which are left unbridged, most of the structures being of stone and iron, and built after the best modern system. The lake, with its surroundings, forms one of the great beauties of Colombo, covering a broad expanse dotted with islands fringed by tropical verdure, and embellished with many fragrant gardens. The view across the still water, with its grand mountain background in the blue distance, is exquisite, particularly at the close of day, when the sunset leaves upon its surface a broad crimson gleam like a roseate blush suffusing a beautiful face. Upon its glassy surface a few pleasure boats add variety to the aquatic picture. There is a charming driveway

or promenade extending quite round the lake, and following all its sinuosities amid low, broad-spread bungalows, cocoanut palms, plantains, and bread-fruit-trees. Occasional waterfowls float among the cosy bays, or swim out upon the lake, engaged in voyages of discovery.

The last time we chanced to observe this interesting expanse of water, a bevy of muscovy ducks — the original stock having been imported by some local official — put off from the shore like a fleet of Spanish galleons of old, bent upon a marine foray. They were proudly led by a drake, whose restless neck, with its brilliant prismatic hues, shone like a cluster of oriental gems in the glow of the morning sun.

The popular driveway within the town is called the Galle Face, having the open sea on one side and the lake on the other. Here, after four o'clock in the afternoon, all the beauty and fashion of the place come in many a gay turnout, and some on horseback, to enjoy the fresh air, the ocean view, and to meet each other socially. Why this esplanade bears the singular name of Galle Face, no one can explain. It is said that it was so called because the roadway faced Galle, but it does no such thing. It faces Aden at the mouth of the Red Sea. However, the name is of little importance. It is a beautiful driveway, recalling the Maiden of Calcutta, improved for a similar purpose.

There is one especially impressive scene to be en-

joyed from this point, — the daily sunset as viewed from the esplanade, when that luminary sinks slowly beneath the surface of the long level reach of the Indian Ocean, which, as we look westward, expands into infinite space. During the brief interval between day and star light, it appears to the watchful observer as though he were looking through a veil, the fabric of which consisted of golden meshes. The air seems full of infinitesimal amber particles, and all things are wrapped in an oriental warmth of color. Where sky and ocean meet, a line of ruby glow burns like lava, slowly changing to the hue of rich red wine. What exquisite harmonies Nature utters to the willing ear, and what inexpressible charms she reveals to appreciative eyes.

Twilight is brief in this latitude, Night, clad in her sombre garb, following close upon the footsteps of the Day, while a soft roseate light ushers in the myriads of heavenly lamps, tremulous and luminous in their varying colors. “A fiery sunset burns itself out quickly,” says the Italian proverb. Though the twilight is brief, the afterglow is often very beautiful, almost rivaling the sunset itself.

Turning the eyes for a moment towards the opposite or eastern sky, the dainty cloudlets, floating serenely in the blue ether, are tinged with a glow of delicate and beautiful hues. From their lofty position the sinking sun is still visible, causing them to blush at the ardor of his parting glance. Perhaps it

is because of the novel surroundings that sunset often strikes one as being so remarkable in these foreign lands. When we pause to analyze the matter, surely we have seen equally fine effects in this daily occurrence at home in Massachusetts, or at Bar Harbor on the coast of Maine.

As we enjoy this scene from the esplanade, a large P. and O. steamship crosses the line of sight just off the shore, bound for Calcutta. She will double Dondra Head and steer northward, touching at Madras; thence, hugging the Coromandel coast, she will make the mouth of the Hooghly River, upon whose treacherous tide she will seek to reach the City of Palaces. We know the route and its stormy character only too well.

There is a pleasant drive over the best and smoothest of roads to the north of Colombo, affording a glimpse of characteristic scenery, and which takes one out to the Kalani temple, where a fine library containing many rare oriental books may be seen. This is believed to be one of the oldest shrines on the island. The present edifice is probably built upon the site of the original one. The temple of Kalani contains a sitting statue of Buddha, with one each of Ganesa, Vishnu, and Siva. The walls of the interior are covered with curious paintings representing various legends, so that altogether it forms one of the local objects of interest which the stranger should not fail to visit. While upon this subject of places

worthy of note in the neighborhood of the capital, let us mention Avisawella, whither one goes by an admirable and pleasant road into the Kalani tea district, fifteen or twenty miles northeast of Colombo. Such excursions afford delightful glimpses of rural island scenery, of birds, trees, flowers, and native life, showing the humble class of country people at home, engaged in their legitimate domestic occupations. A fifteen or twenty mile trip and back is not too far to accomplish in a jinrikisha, and it is also an extremely comfortable mode of traveling. It is just ten years, at this writing, since this comfortable little vehicle was first introduced into Ceylon, during which time it has become a great favorite as a cheap and rapid means of transportation. The author has made a similar jaunt inland from Yokohama, in a single day, the coolie who drew the jinrikisha coming in at last in as fresh a condition as a well-driven horse would do. It must be remembered that roads in Japan and Ceylon are as perfectly smooth and hard as our best macadamized ones in this country. The average of our Massachusetts inland roadways will by no means compare favorably with the three thousand miles and more of those which traverse this island in the Indian Ocean.

The choicest portion of Colombo as a place of residence is the suburb nearest to Victoria Park, which is but little removed from the business and bustle of the town. We say "bustle" of the town,

but it is a misleading word when it is applied to tropical life. The people of equatorial regions think that haste makes waste, and so everything is done quietly, and not without due consideration. This is a temperament induced by the climate, — one into which even Europeans lapse, after dwelling here for a considerable length of time. It is stated that there are not more than six thousand Europeans upon the entire island, but we are inclined to consider this an underestimate. Statistics show that the rate of mortality as compared with the number of the entire population is such as to prove the climate to be an unusually healthy one for the tropics. There are certain portions of Ceylon, however, to which this conclusion will not apply, where it is so malarial and productive of fever that even the natives cannot live in them. The most formidable diseases which prevail here are of a malarial nature, but they do not always make their appearance in the form of fever. Dysentery is apt to attack strangers, and elephantiasis is of frequent occurrence among the natives, but it almost never appears among white people. Diseases of the liver are also common. Notwithstanding the prevailing heat in the southern portions of the island, sunstroke is very rare. Persons of good habits, and who do not unreasonably expose themselves, seem generally to enjoy good health. Cholera and smallpox occasionally become epidemic, but rarely among the Europeans. There is the usual prejudice shown by the

common people against vaccination, and consequently large numbers are sometimes swept away by small-pox.

The slightest physical injury, such as a cut or bruise which breaks the skin, requires prompt attention here, otherwise tetanus may follow. It is the same in equatorial America, where a neglected wound is very liable to terminate in lockjaw. An antiseptic bandage should always be at hand for immediate use in case of accident in these low latitudes, where the atmosphere is charged with poisonous microbes watching a chance to do mischief; an open wound is just what they seek, and they rush in myriads to infect any such spot.

One instinctively seeks the shade of the broad piazza which surrounds the hotel, as the sun approaches the zenith. Only the early part of the day and the late afternoon will admit of the traveler's appearing abroad with any degree of comfort. A local tableau is pretty sure to present itself, as it is the favorite time for the native jugglers and snake charmers to appear upon the scene, squatting upon ~~their hands~~ after the true Asiatic fashion, and quite oblivious of the fervor of the broiling sun, while they solicit your attention to their entertaining tricks. There are generally three performers on these occasions, one of whom is the active member of the party, assisted by a lad of twelve or fifteen years, while the third elicits peculiar notes in a minor key from a reed

instrument not unlike a flageolet, but utterly devoid of harmony. One is forced to admit that they are very clever, these Indian prestidigitators, excelling in all forms of sleight-of-hand. Their facility in causing articles to disappear suddenly and then to exhibit themselves in out-of-the-way places is curious as well as unaccountable to an outsider. A common trick with these performers is to throw a ball very high into the air, which seems to fade away as the eye follows it, and does not apparently return to the ground. It literally vanishes from sight. The keenest watchfulness of the observer does not solve the manner of accomplishing this trick.

"We are all hypnotized," said one of the spectators on the piazza, "else how could that ball come down to the earth and not be seen to do so? It *must* descend, having once ascended," he added; "that is a law of nature."

"It may possibly be something of that sort," responded another equally dazed spectator. "The Hindus know all about hypnotism, and have practiced it more or less for many centuries, though we are but just beginning to investigate it."

"How these marvelous things are performed, no foreigner ever knows," added a third. "The power is handed down from father to son, but is never revealed to the multitude."

The only way we can explain some of the tricks and apparent miracles which these performers exhibit

is by supposing that for the time being we are quite under the hypnotic influence of the magician. The author has seen in India proper a performer in this line extend a glass bowl full of water in his hand at arm's length, and cause it to gradually grow less and less in size until it disappeared altogether. After a moment it appeared again in the hand and at the same place, beginning at first about the size of an English walnut, and growing before the spectator's eyes to its normal condition.

Another common trick is to plant a mango seed in an earthen pot before the spectator's eyes and cause the same to spring up and grow into a small bush, then blossom and bear a green fruit, which finally ripens until it is in a condition to be plucked from the stem. This entire process is accomplished in half an hour, while some side tricks are going on. The swallowing of a sword, or rather passing its blade down the throat into the stomach, is very common with these Singhalese itinerant exhibitors, a facility which is acquired after much patient practice, and which is not necessarily injurious to the performer.

The snakes which these "charmners," as they call themselves, handle with such apparent recklessness and freedom are of the deadly cobra family, fatally poisonous when their fangs penetrate the flesh of other animals or of human beings; but as is well known, the repulsive and seemingly dangerous creatures which are publicly exhibited in this manner

have had their natural means of defense carefully removed. Yet, true to their instincts, they may be seen now and again to strike viciously at the bare arms and legs of the natives who handle them, while the performance is going on. It is not a very pleasing, though a curious exhibition, and as a rule is avoided by ladies. The author has seen a sensitive person of the gentler sex so wrought upon by this performance as to cause her to faint. Sometimes the cobras do seem to pay attention to the low, droning notes of the pipe, which is often accompanied by a rude tom-tom. The creatures raise themselves up on their tails, swaying slowly hither and thither with a uniform motion, as though realizing that they are on exhibition. That they know their owners is evident, since upon the approach of a stranger they immediately show great irritation and a desire to strike with their fangs. One never witnesses these scenes without a sense of surprise that the cobras do not promptly endeavor to escape upon being taken out of the box in which they are transported. They do not show any such desire, but hasten back to their place of confinement, which is doubtless made comfortable for them, and where some bit of favorite food is always given to them after each exhibition. Thus they soon learn to associate the idea of feeding time with their public performance, which doubtless adds to their docility on the occasion.

These repulsive-looking creatures are hooded and

spectacled, vary in length from three to six feet, and are covered with dark spots upon a slate-colored skin. Back of the head and along the neck is a membrane which they have the power of expanding when under excitement, and around the eyes are circles giving the effect of spectacles, which the snakes seem to need, for though their hearing is acute enough they have a very dull capacity as to sight. The cobra has received much attention from naturalists in consequence of certain singular habits which are attributed to the creature. The natives do not trouble themselves much about it, except to give it a wide berth when it is encountered, knowing only too well the fatal nature of its bite.

Professor Houdin, a famous Parisian magician, when on a visit to this island, after watching the Indian jugglers for a week, invited as many of them as chose to come to a public exhibition given by himself. The natives came by scores, and the reader may be sure that Houdin did his best. The Singhalese "sleight-o'-hand men," when they saw him perform many of their own tricks with far greater expertness than they could do, were surprised beyond measure. He then exhibited others so strange and so inexplicable to them that the Singhalese declared he must be in league with evil spirits. In their performances they were openly assisted by one or two associates, a prime necessity to enable them to deceive the lookers-on. But here was an unpretentious, simply dressed

European, who stood before them alone, with only a small, common table upon which to place necessary articles, plainly shown before all eyes, who yet puzzled them completely. His tricks were mostly new to them, and they gazed with open mouths at the white necromancer, then into each others' faces, as much as to say: "What does this mean? whence does this man obtain power to perform miracles?" All this was intensely amusing to the English residents of Colombo, who also formed a large portion of the audience.

But the climax was yet to come.

When Houdin finally blew a fiery flame and smoke from his mouth, — a well-known act among European performers, — these superstitious islanders absolutely fled from his presence in undisguised consternation, unanimously and vehemently declaring that he must be the king devil himself come to bewitch them. This was the more surprising as these Indian experts must have realized the true source of their own deceptive powers.

The hoarse, monotonous croaking of the crows at all hours of the day is one of the ceaseless annoyances and accompaniments of life in Colombo. Early risers see whole colonies of these obtrusive and omnipresent birds coming in from their roosting-places in the neighboring groves, seeking whom they may devour. They advance in irresistible numbers, like an army with banners loudly announcing their approach, like a

marching regiment preceded by noisy fifes and drums, now wheeling as one huge body, and now breaking into sections and platoons. One might successfully resist a score of them, but when they come by the thousand, it is like a plague of locusts. Crows enjoy nearly the same immunity throughout the populous districts of India proper, and are to be found nearly as much in possession at Benares, Delhi, or Cawnpore as they are here in the capital of Ceylon.

About twelve miles south of Colombo, just off the shore at Belligam, lies what is known as Crow Island, whither thousands of these birds resort every night to roost. They do not fail, however, to return to the capital bright and early in the morning. Probably a flight of twelve or fifteen miles from their regular night quarters before breakfast is of no account to these active, swift-winged creatures. There is still another crow-roost nearer to Colombo, at Mount Lavonia, in the thick palm groves which skirt the shore, within rifle-shot of that pleasant summer resort. When they awake in the early morning and prepare for their flight cityward, the combined noise which they make is something like the roar of artillery.

CHAPTER X.

Birds on the Rampage. — Familiar Nuisances. — Silver-Spoon Thieves. — Doctrine of Metempsychosis. — Various Nationalities forming the Population. — Common Languages. — Tamils are the Wage-Earners. — The Singhalese Proper are Agriculturists. — Queer Belief in Demons. — Propitiation! — The Veddahs. — Attacking Wild Elephants. — Serpent Worship. — Polyandry. — Native Singhalese Women. — Dress of Both Sexes. — Streets of Colombo on a Gala Day. — An English Four-in-Hand. — Mount Lavinia.

AFTER becoming weary of the snake exhibition, it was suddenly remembered that we had been cautioned to close the windows upon leaving the sleeping apartment, so we hastened thither to see if all was as it should be. Upon entering the room, we were greeted by the presence of a score of dark-feathered creatures, — crows or rooks, whichever you please to call them, — handsome, familiar, notorious birds, whose black, shining plumage was daintily shot with blue, disposed here and there in cool, unblushing possession of the premises. Each exposed article of dress had been duly overhauled and pecked at, then dropped in utter confusion upon the bed or floor. A few soft biscuit, which had been left in a plate upon a table, had utterly disappeared, while a sugar bowl which had accompanied the morning cup of coffee was overturned and the contents devoured. One pillow-case had been relieved by some means of its contents, and hung from the top

of the bedpost like a flag of truce, as though the enemy wished to stay all hostile proceedings. In short, the room had been raided by the rooks. They understood the first movement made to drive them away, and sailed gracefully from the room through the window, quite calm and unruffled.

There is any number of these dark-plumed freebooters all about the streets and dwellings, eagerly on the lookout for just such a chance to impose upon thoughtless strangers. They fly in and out of open doors, lighting confidently upon the back of one's chair at mealtime, trying curiously the texture of his coat with their sharp bills. No one molests them or makes them afraid. They are far tamer than our domestic fowls, as they are never killed and eaten like hens and chickens. A Singhalese's religion, as has been said, will not permit him to take animal life. All animals are sacred to a Buddhist; even snakes and vermin have nothing to fear from him. As to these Ceylon crows, one regards them with a full sense of their audacity, but the birds themselves do not seem to be at all annoyed by such scrutiny. Cocking their heads on one side, parrot-like, they coolly proceed to look you out of countenance. Their mischievous and vicious activity is temporarily suspended during your presence, but no sooner is one's back turned upon them than their reckless antics and thieving propensities are resumed with increased vigor.

One of their favorite tricks is to purloin silver spoons, being attracted perhaps by their brightness, and as they are not able to consume them, though like the ostrich they can eat almost anything, they seek some unfrequented piece of ground and dig a hole with their sharp claws, wherein they bury the stolen property from sight. The employees of the Grand Oriental Hotel are obliged to keep a sharp lookout for their table-ware, as anything small and bright at once challenges the curiosity of the crows, and is liable to be stolen by them. They are most adroit thieves, and watch with cunning precaution for a chance to perpetrate any sort of mischief.

There is another reason besides that of a religious prompting which leads to the protection and toleration of the crows in this island. They are the recognized scavengers of the city of Colombo, just as vultures are permitted in Vera Cruz, where they are protected by law, for a similar purpose. Not a scrap of carrion escapes the voracious appetites of either species of these birds. All such matter cast into the street instantly disappears, while, if left exposed to decay in the hot sun, it might prove pestilential. It is remembered that the question seriously suggested itself at Vera Cruz, which was most to be deplored, the presence of the uncleanly, disgusting vultures, or that of Yellow Jack, as the prevailing epidemic is called in southern Mexico.

“Why don’t they kill these nuisances?” asked one

of our fellow travelers of another, while he impatiently drove away a crow from the back of his chair in the hotel at Colombo.

"They have too much respect for their dead relatives," was the reply of a companion.

"Dead relatives?" queried the first speaker.

"What has that to do with it?"

"Very much. These Singhalese are believers in the doctrine of metempsychosis."

"Who?"

"Metempsychosis; that is, in the transmigration of the soul from human bodies into animals."

"Don't see where that idea comes in," said the obtuse querist.

"Why, if a fellow killed one of these impertinent rooks, don't you know, he might be murdering his dead grandmother!"

These Buddhists of Ceylon believe that departed spirits who have behaved badly in human shape reappear in the form of domestic animals or birds, and those who have done well are turned into wild animals. The most dreadful fate is held to be the re-appearance in life in the body of a woman, a sad and significant reflection upon the treatment to which they are universally subjected.

The Singhalese and Tamils are the most numerous among the population of Colombo. Mohammedans, Malays, and Parsees, as intimated, are also here in considerable numbers, mingled with representatives

of other nationalities. The Mohammedans are best known as Moormen. Though in the far past of the island's history Ceylon was so long and so intimately connected with the Celestial Empire, the author did not even chance to see a Chinaman on the island, though at the north and elsewhere in the several provinces these Mongolians are to be found. In their migrating westward, the race cease to establish a foothold in numbers beyond Penang. This latter island, as well as that of Singapore, is dominated by them, the small trade of both places being wholly in their hands. But beyond the Malacca Straits, they have not made their way westward to any considerable extent.

The Singhalese language, which is soft and flowing, is founded on the Sanskrit, an evidence in itself of the antiquity of the people. Tamil is the language of southern India, and is used here by the Moormen as well as by the Tamils proper. There is a Portuguese patois still spoken by European descendants and half-breeds, while the Dutch language is quite unknown, though that people remained here nearly a century and a half after the Portuguese were driven out of the island. The English tongue is becoming more and more common in all populous centres like Colombo, Trincomalee, Kandy, and Point de Galle. The Singhalese are nearly always Buddhists, while the Tamils, as a people, are Hindus. The latter, as we have said, are the wage-earners of the country, working along-

shore at the wharves, loading and unloading ships, belonging to the coal barges, and the like. The Singhalese proper take higher rank ; the sort of occupation accepted by the Tamils would not on any account be adopted by a Singhalese. Caste is imperious and imperative, though it is strictly discountenanced by the religion of the people, and especially so by the English government, which does not fail to exercise its influence against it.

The Tamils, being light of body and used to laborious occupations, make the best jinrikisha men, — the small, man-propelled chaise, — trotting off in their almost naked condition with the speed of a horse, while drawing the vehicle and its occupants behind them. They rival in fleetness the little gigs or hackeries, as they are called, propelled by small and active brahmin bulls, gayly decked with tinkling bells. Some of the zebus, with their humped necks, deep dewlaps, silky hides, and deer-like limbs, are really handsome creatures. These gigs with their peculiar animals, and the jinrikishas drawn by Tamils, are striking and novel features to a stranger when he first lands at Colombo, unless he comes from the East. The idea of the jinrikisha is borrowed from Japan, but that of the small bullock cart comes from India, where they are common all over the country. It is surprising to see with what ease and speed these little creatures will trot along the smooth roads, guided by reins attached to a ring which passes through a hole in the cartilage

of their nostrils. There is a larger breed of cattle which are imported from India for farming purposes, but most of those in common use are the small ones we have described. Both are of the zebu breed. A certain number of the larger ones, like elephants, are kept in the temples of India and worshiped as sacred animals. It will doubtless strike the reader that there is a certain degree of inconsistency in using these cattle as beasts of burden, twisting their tails to elicit a high degree of speed, and in kneeling solemnly before the same creatures as sacred when they are kept within the walls of the temples.

The Singhalese proper make very good mechanics, and can imitate a delicate model when submitted to them, equaling the Chinese, whose fidelity in this respect has passed into a proverb. They are specially expert in the manufacture of wooden boxes from choice material, inlaid with ivory, tortoise shell, mother of pearl, and the like; but above all else they pride themselves as a people upon being agriculturists, a planter's occupation being considered as fitting for the highest caste to engage in. It is in the cultivation of broad rice-fields that the Singhalese is seen at his best. This occupation he fully understands. A predilection for it seems to have been born in him; his forefathers have followed the business for centuries, and success in this line of occupation means to him independence and plenty. All classes of the natives of Ceylon are full of superstitions, and support

hundreds of demon-priests, who thrive upon the foolishness and fears of the masses. Incantations of the most extravagant character are the principal means used by the priests, who are also called doctors, and who pretend to relieve sickness and pain by barbarous means, such as hideous dances, beating of tom-toms, blowing of horns, wearing hideous masks, and other devices. All this nonsense is popularly supposed to drive away the evil spirits who cause the sickness.

The Singhalese believe that all ills in life are inflicted as punishment, and that evil spirits are the agents of Providence to apply the same. They think that they are under penalty not alone for sins committed during their present lives, but also for their wrongdoing in some previous state of existence. They may have been "rogue" elephants, thieving crows, vicious buffaloes, or vile cobras, all of which is quite in accordance with their creed as promulgated by the Buddhist priests.

They seem to have no skill whatever in the treatment of the most simple illness. The author has never, even among the most barbaric tribes, quite isolated from contact with white men, known a people so deficient in this respect. Some few of the Singhalese planters regularly set aside a small portion of their rice-fields, and leave them unharvested, for the use of the demons! It is intimated that the priests manage to secretly reap these portions for their own

benefit, representing it to have been done by the evil spirits, whose good-will has thus been secured in behalf of the credulous planter. The base and groveling superstitions and credulity of the natives of Ceylon are simply disgusting. There are said to be three thousand devil-priests supported in the island, living with unblushing assurance upon the ignorance of the masses. How closely akin is all this to the Roman Catholic priests, who pretend "on liberal terms" to pray departed souls out of purgatory.)

Does it not seem extraordinary that the idea of worshiping or propitiating some powerful evil spirit should prevail almost universally among barbarous and half-civilized races? It is not the force of example which inculcates such an idea, since the author has met with it as a native custom among various tribes situated as far apart as the poles. The Alaska Indians, the denizens of "Darkest Africa," the Maoris of New Zealand, and the cannibal tribes of the Fiji Islands, all yield more or less to this instinct. Nor were the Indians of North America devoid of an equivalent custom when the European settlers first came among them. It is only natural that all people, civilized or otherwise, should be exercised by an instinct leading up to the worship of a great Heavenly Father of mankind, but the belief in the existence of an opposing and more important power, which must first be propitiated, is certainly as

singular as it is universal among the barbarous races of both hemispheres. When visiting the famous temples of Nikkō, in Japan, the author saw a priest sitting before a temple in the open air, beside a collection of prepared pine chips with which he was feeding a small fire upon an open stone slab, and accompanying the burning process by beating at intervals upon a tom-tom. On inquiring as to the significance of this singular ceremony, we were sagely told by the native guide that the priest thus solicited the goodwill of the god of fire, who was very powerful and inimical to man, unless his favor was frequently sought by such means.

“How terrible it would be,” added the devout Japanese, “if he (the god of fire) were to consume these sacred temples,” pointing as he spoke to the unique group of buildings so elaborately ornamented, which contain such priceless hoards of rich bronzes, carved images, and delicate lacquered ware.

The sacred temples of Nikkō are in their way quite unequaled in the world, having, with other remarkable attractions, the consecrating influence of great antiquity. The oldest Japanese bronzes are valued at their weight in gold; indeed, that precious metal forms a large percentage of the material of which they are composed. Modern bronze, as compared with that of ten centuries ago, in Japan, is a very different and inexpensive compound.

Any person who has been at sea in a severe

storm when there were Chinamen on board the ship has seen the superstitious Mongolians throw bits of "joss-paper" overboard, bearing certain inscriptions and mysterious characters, intended to pacify the water-devil, as they call the spirit of the storm.

A peculiar race of wild people, called Veddahs, inhabit the forest fastness of Bintenne, a district situated southeast from Kandy forty or fifty miles, and a hundred and twenty or thereabouts from Colombo, in a northeast direction. The territory to which these people confine themselves is known as Veddaratta, or country of the Veddahs, whither their ancestors retired more than two thousand years ago, when their Singhalese conquerors came to Ceylon from the north. Bintenne, which gives its name to the district, transcends Anuradhapura in antiquity. Long before the Wijayan invasion, it was one of the chief aboriginal cities, and for centuries was the most important place in Ceylon. During the Dutch dominion Bintenne was made a place of note, and is spoken of by them as "the finest city in the island." It is now remote, a circumscribed and secluded district; very few Europeans have ever penetrated any great distance within its borders. Indeed, the density of its jungles forbids access to those who know not its solitary footpaths. The singular people of whom we write are now inconsiderable in number, speaking a language understood only by themselves, and are doubtless descendants of the aborigines of the island,

a race who lived here previous to any dates of which we have record. The country which they inhabit is about ninety miles long by half that distance in width, in the southeastern part of the island, and extends towards the sea from the base of the mountain region of the central province, commencing near the base of the Badulla hills. There is abundant evidence connecting these barbarians with the Yakkos, who were the oldest known race in Ceylon. They live mostly upon the game which they kill with bows and arrows. They build no regular habitations, live in caves, grass huts, and the open air, and avoid intercourse with all other tribes, especially the English. They are an undersized people, the men being only five feet in height on an average, and the women still less. Their neglect of any sort of ablution is a marked feature of their habits, while their intellectual capacity is placed, by people who have taken considerable trouble to inform themselves upon the subject, at as low a gauge as possible in human beings. In the matter of cleanliness, the wild animals about them are more civilized than they, their long, tangled, unkempt hair adding to their weird, uncanny appearance. What little intercourse they have with other people is almost entirely by signs, and they seem to be either disinclined or unable to talk intelligently. They are said to be wonderful marksmen with bow and arrow. As they practice constantly from boyhood, this is but natural. With the exception of the knife, the bow



and arrow is their only weapon of offense or defense. It is thought that there are not over a couple of thousand Veddahs now in existence, an aggregate which is annually diminished. They are still accustomed to the most primitive ways, producing fire, when it is needed, by rapidly turning a pointed stick in a hole made in perfectly dry wood, their bowstrings acting as a propeller in twirling the stick. This is a sure but laborious way to obtain fire. It is a fact which has been commented upon considerably, and which is perhaps worthy of mention in this connection, that, in many important particulars, these Veddahs are very like the wild native tribes of Australia. This is not only evinced in certain physical resemblances, but also in their hereditary habits, their unwritten tongue, and some other particulars. Much is made of these facts by certain writers on physical geography, who have a theory that in the far past Australia was joined or was adjacent to Ceylon, notwithstanding the wide reach of ocean which now intervenes.

These wild people of the district of Bintenne are divided into two communities, — the Rock or Jungle Veddahs, and the Village Veddahs, the latter living nearest to the settlements on the east coast, dwelling in cabins built in the rudest manner, and cultivating some simple grains and vegetables, while the former remain in the depth of the forest, roaming hither and thither, and avoiding all contact with civilization. They are said to have preserved this isolation and

manner of living from the earliest period of the island's history. They supplement their other food with various edible roots, wild fruits, and honey, adding lizards, roasted monkeys, and venison. They are not Buddhists, and have no hesitation as to the taking of animal life, or in eating the meat of bird or beast. It is said that they eat freely of carrion, or decayed animal substances, with perfect impunity, — like the Arctic races, who live largely upon putrid whale blubber in the summer season; in winter, it freezes so solid as to keep it from putrefaction. The wild elephant would seem to be too powerful an animal for these poorly armed savages to attack, but it is not so, — they do hunt him, and successfully. Their mode is to lie in hiding near what is known as an elephant path until one makes his appearance, and as he passes, at a favorable moment, when he lifts his foot nearest to the hunter, a short steel-headed arrow is shot into the soft sole. When the animal stamps his foot with pain, he only drives the shaft still deeper into his limb. The poor beast soon lies down, in his agony, and in this climate a wound festers with great rapidity. The huge creature cannot bear his wounded foot to the ground, and sinks upon the earth, after great suffering, in a helpless condition. The Veddah huntsman then approaches, and with a well-aimed spear, thrust where the spinal marrow and the brain unite, the creature's misery is ended, and he quickly breathes his last.

It is said by those who are well informed about these wild people, that their best huntsmen are less cruel and equally successful. The plan they adopt is to lie in wait near a spot frequented by the elephants, probably some watercourse where they come to drink. At a favorable moment, the huntsman, being only a few yards off, sends a steel-headed shaft into the brain of the huge beast by aiming just upward behind the ear, whereupon the elephant falls lifeless upon the ground.

At certain seasons, these people bring honey and dried venison to the frontier, with an occasional elephant's tusk, and exchange them for cloth, hatchets, arrowheads, and a few simple articles which they have learned to use. They have no circulating medium like money; they could make no use of such. They seem to have no idea of God or Heaven, and erect neither temples nor idols, though a sort of propitiatory devil worship is said to prevail among them, the real purport of which is quite inexplicable. Like other tribes of whom we have spoken, they appear to have an idea that some invisible evil power is antagonistic to them and their well-being, and that their safety lies in offering homage in some form to that power. Of any supreme influence for good, they have no conception. They have heard of the white man's God, but believe their Devil is far more powerful. Like the humbler class of Italians, they have a mortal dread of something equivalent to the "evil eye."

Such was an explanation given to us by an intelligent Buddhist at Kandy, who had once been a priest.

The worship of the serpent as an emblem of divinity has been attributed to the earliest inhabitants of this island, but the Veddahs have no such faith. One of the most ancient among the multiplicity of names which Ceylon has borne is *Nágadipa*, or "snake island," in reference, it is thought by some, to this special worship of the aborigines. To the author, however, it seems much more reasonable that the name may have arisen from the great number of these reptiles which were, and which still are, found upon its soil. There are still some tribes in Ceylon who reverence the serpent as an emblem, and who actually devote temples to them, as the Hindus have done to bulls and monkeys for ages.

The Veddahs are considered to be utter barbarians, but we very much doubt if many of their customs are any more barbaric than some which prevail among the Singhalese. Take, for instance, the revolting practice of polyandry, which is still countenanced in Ceylon. This custom, so strange and unnatural, has existed here for thousands of years, and longer still in India proper, as well as in Thibet and Cashmere. History tells us that this odious custom was common in Britain at the period of Cæsar's invasion. It is said to be dying out in this island since the advent of the English. Let us at least hope so, though the author was informed upon the spot that it was not

unknown among the natives of the Kandian district at the present time. Conventionality has all the force of enacted law. Vice and virtue, it would seem, are relative terms, both being amenable to latitude and longitude. There is a custom among the Alaska Indians, deemed by them to be simply a rite of hospitality, which would consign a person to state prison if perpetrated in New England. Is there not also a legalized system of social debasement in Japan, so utterly vile in our estimation as to be absolutely unmentionable in detail?

We have not yet in reality departed from Colombo, concerning which a few more words should be added before taking the reader inland to "imperial" Kandy in the central province among the hills.

Colombo is an especially well-regulated and well-governed town. No reasonable fault can be found with its police arrangements, for notwithstanding the singular variety of nationalities gathered together within its limits, one witnesses no lawlessness; there are no visible improprieties of conduct, but quiet reigns supreme, both in the Singhalese and in the English quarter of the capital. The most lawless element here is the crows, and one must admit that these audacious creatures are irrepressible.

The native women of the middle class whom one sees in the city are singular objects as regards costume, and appear as if engaged in a constant masquerade, being decorated in the most striking manner.

They wear silver and brass rings thrust through the tops and bottoms of their ears, through their nostrils and lips, their toes sometimes being also covered with small gold coins attached to rings. Their ankles, fingers, and wrists are decked with bangles and rings, while their diaphanous dress is of rainbow colors. The author saw women, who were acting as nurses to the children of European residents, wearing all these gewgaws as described, the gross weight of which must have been considerable. Some of these women would be good-looking, not to say handsome, were they less disfigured by the cheap jewelry which they pile upon themselves, without regard to good taste or reason. It is an ingrained barbaric fondness for trinkets, which it would seem that they never quite outgrow, as women old and decrepit indulge it to the utmost limit of their means, thus thoughtlessly adding by contrast to their worn and wasted appearance. As to their being employed as nurses in the English officers' families, there is a certain degree of fitness in that, for they are very faithful in this relation; they are naturally loyal to their trust, and as a rule have excellent dispositions, so that the children become very fond of them.

The men wear their jet-black hair long, done up with a circular shell comb in front, which keeps it back from the forehead and temples, and often have a high shell comb at the back of the head to keep the coil together, all of which gives them a most feminine

appearance. The women do not wear combs at all, but braid their profuse ink-black locks, and twist them into a snood behind the head, a certain quantity being formed into puffs like bow-knots, and the whole kept together with long metallic pins, having ornamental heads of brass or silver. Like the Japanese women, their hair is so arranged as to be very showy, and they take great pride in its appearance.

This passion for covering their persons with gewgaws is as old with these people as the ancient city of Anuradhapura, where the same custom prevailed among the Singhalese two thousand years ago. The abundance and beauty of the precious stones found in the soil of the island naturally led to their being mounted and worn by the wealthiest people. This fashion was imitated, as usual, by the humbler classes to the very limit of their means. If the latter could not afford the genuine article, they were obliged, as they are to-day, to be satisfied with cheap imitations.

The rank and file of the common people, clad in various colors, form a brilliant panorama in the streets of Colombo on a gala day, mingled with whom are itinerant exhibitors of legerdemain, snake charmers, hustling dealers in gewgaws, peddlers of bonbons, native women bearing baskets of fruit on their heads, and naked Tamil laborers, — living bronzes, — on their way to the wharves. All phases of life are represented. An occasional blind and decrepit native is seen, guided by a small lad, who solicits pennies with

which to purchase a little rice and curry, as the boy says in broken English. The most persistent beggars of all whom one meets in the thoroughfares are the Buddhist priests, who extend a dirty brass dish for alms, while mumbling some unintelligible gibberish. An occasional stranger and some humble natives respond to his appeals by contributing a few pennies, but the aggregate of his collection must be very small.

There dashes by us, while we watch the scene, a gay party of English residents in a four-horse drag, bound to Mount Lavonia. This is a pleasant resort five or six miles from Colombo, on the coast line, where there is a very good public house, built originally for a private residence by a former governor of the island. It stands upon a promontory some fifty feet in height, which juts out into the sea, washed on either side by the waves of the Indian Ocean. This hotel is a conspicuous white building, and forms a familiar landmark for inward-bound vessels. It is much cooler at Lavonia than at Colombo, as the location is more open to the sea breezes, besides being upon an elevation.

Let us also invite the reader to embark upon an excursion; but in place of hugging the sea coast by means of a coach and four, we will turn our faces inland by railway toward the olden capital of Kandy, in the heart of the island.

CHAPTER XI.

The Ancient Capital of Kandy. — An Artificial Lake. — The Great River of Ceylon. — Site of the Capital of the Central Province. — On the Way from Colombo to Kandy. — The Tiny Musk-Deer. — The Wild Boar. — Native Cabins. — From the Railway Car Windows. — The Lotus. — Destructive White Ants and their Enemies. — Wild Animals. — The Mother of Twins. — A Little Waif. — A Zigzag Railway. — An Expensive Road to build. — "Sensation Rock" with an Evil History. — Grand Alpine Scenery.

KANDY, the Maha-neura, or "great city," of the Singhalese, one of the ancient capitals of Ceylon, is beautifully situated in the bosom of the verdant hills in the central province of the island, just about half way between the east and west coasts, a little more than seventy miles north of Colombo. Here the town nestles on a bend of the Maha-velle-Ganga ("great sandy river"), which nearly surrounds the old city at a distance of three miles from its centre. It became the capital of the island in 1592. As it was repeatedly captured and burned by the Portuguese, Dutch, and English, it presents no architectural monuments with any pretension to antiquity. Here we are about seventeen hundred feet above sea level, beside a spacious, though artificial lake, which represents a small portion of the grand system of irrigation for which Ceylon was so famous through a score of centuries. There is no natural lake worthy of the

name in the country, though there are numerous ponds, large and small, here and there, especially in the southern part of the island. In the centre of this large sheet of water, with its charming aspect of repose and freshness, is a tiny island, where the last king of Kandy, who was a notorious tyrant, established his harem with true oriental lavishness. It is now improved as a safe place for the storage of gunpowder and other explosive war materials. At least, it was formerly thus appropriated, though perhaps it is not so now. The infamous sovereign referred to, Sri Wikrema Raja Singha, at whose death ended a long and famous line of kings, was outrageous beyond all precedent. He was accustomed to behead any one of his counselors who dared to disagree with him, also wreaking his vengeance upon the individual's innocent family, males and females, by treating them in a similar manner.

The immense tank at Kandy is of modern construction, having been finished early in the present century by the king whose name we have just given. The heavy embankment which holds the lake in its bed has been made into a broad and most charming esplanade, decked with handsome shade trees, thus surrounding the basin with an inviting driveway and promenade, enlivened by choice flowering shrubs, whose names only an accomplished botanist could remember. Among them the ever-fragrant cape jessamine is conspicuous, together with beds of violets

and mignonette. Palms prevail everywhere on the island, with their bare trunks reaching sixty or seventy feet upward, at which point they throw out their deep green, gracefully drooping foliage in thick clusters. The lake is about three miles in circumference, encircled by a low stone wall, and is, judged even by modern rules, a remarkably skillful piece of engineering.

The Maha-velle-Ganga rises in the base of the neighboring mountains, and, flowing past Kandy, turns to the north, finally discharging itself by several mouths into the ocean far away on the east coast, near the port of Trincomalee. It drains in its course upwards of four thousand square miles of territory, being a hundred and thirty miles long, and is navigable by small boats nearly to Kandy. The hills which encompass the town make of it a verdant amphitheatre, and are themselves dotted with flourishing tea-plantations, mostly owned by English agriculturists, the growing of tea, as already explained, having largely superseded, or perhaps we should say supplemented, that of coffee throughout the island. In the higher regions, near the foothills, where the big river rises, there used to be a great coffee district, healthy and populous; but alas! malaria and jungle fever lie crouching upon its lower banks like a beast of prey, ready to pounce upon the passing and incautious traveler, while hungry, wide-jawed crocodiles lie half-concealed in the low mangroves, ready to snap up any

dog or young native child which thoughtlessly approaches their domain. The Ceylon crocodile is a large animal, quite common on the inland rivers and deserted, half ruined tanks, and frequently measures over twenty feet from the snout to the tip of the tail. In the malarial districts, all sorts of insects, reptiles, and wild animals thrive and multiply abundantly, but to man, and even to most domestic animals, such regions are poisonous.

The reason why the river-courses in Ceylon are so unsalubrious, so fever-inducing, is easily explained. These waterways overflow their banks in the rainy season, depositing an accumulation of vegetable matter which remains to decompose when the river subsides, thus infecting the surrounding country. The banks of swiftly flowing streams are considered to be healthful localities, but they do not prove so in this tropical island. The Maha-velle-Ganga, which is the Mississippi of Ceylon, is no exception to this rule.

In coming to Kandy from Colombo, the railway for the first forty miles threads its way through a thinly populated region, over a level country which is often so low as to be of a marshy nature, though the soil is marked by overwhelming fertility. About fifteen miles from the capital is Henaratgoda, where the government Tropical Gardens are situated. Here the process of acclimatization for exotics is tried with plants which might not thrive at the altitude of the Botanical Gardens of Peradenia, near Kandy. The

railway stations, it will be observed, are all beautifully ornamented with tropical flowers adapted to the situation. This is getting to be a universal custom all over the world. Even in Russia, on the line between St. Petersburg and Moscow, every depot is thus beautified. The railways are a government monopoly in this island, furnishing a handsome revenue. There are no presidents to swallow up salaries of fifty thousand dollars each, nor other ornamental officials receiving enormous sums of money for imaginary services. At each station in Ceylon, pretty children of both sexes offer the traveler tempting native fruits. They are very interesting, these children, in spite of their unkempt hair and entire nudity. Their big black eyes are full of pleading earnestness and bright expression, while their dark brown skin shines like polished mahogany under the hot rays of an equatorial sun. The land seen on the route is interspersed by rice plantations, groves of palms, bananas, and plantains, while the jungle at intervals is seen to be impassable, the trees are so bound together with stout, creeping vines and close undergrowth. Hump-backed cows and black swine, with an occasional domesticated buffalo, are all the animals one sees, though there are a plenty of wild ones not far away in less populous districts, including bears, deer, leopards, and elephants. The buffalo is almost an amphibious animal, and may be seen for many hours daily nearly immersed in the ponds, lakes,

or rivers, only its head, horns, and nose visible above the water. Thus he will lie or stand for any length of time, chewing the cud like other creatures of his kind, until hunger compels him to seek food on the dry land. Happy for him if he be not attacked, while thus exposed, by the voracious pond leeches, more fatal than the flies which he strives to avoid by thus immersing his body. The elephants are still numerous, notwithstanding so many have been exported to the continent hard by. A carefully prepared estimate published at Colombo last year (close of 1893) places the probable number of wild elephants in Ceylon at five thousand. It is also believed that the small numbers of these animals which are now shot by Europeans annually will not decrease this aggregate, because of the natural breeding which is all the time going on. There are also found here in abundance the wild boar, jackal, ant-eater, and a great variety of monkeys (the latter afraid only of Europeans), and the cheetah. This last named is an animal of the leopard family, nearly three feet in height, and six feet long from nose to tail-tip, but exceedingly active and over-fond of monkey-flesh. It is of a dun color, with round black spots distributed uniformly over the body.

The tiny musk-deer, so called, though it has no musk-bag or scent about it of that pungent nature, is indigenous to Ceylon. There is a stuffed specimen in the Colombo museum, but the author did not

happen to see one alive. It is only about twelve or fourteen inches long and ten high when at maturity, but it is formed exactly like a full-grown North American deer or antelope, having a gray hide dappled with white spots, like a young fawn. Its exquisite delicacy of limbs is very beautiful. Several attempts have been made to transport a pair from this island to the Zoölogical Gardens of London, but the little creatures have never survived the voyage. They prove to be as delicate in constitution as in physical formation.

We have incidentally mentioned the wild boar, to hunt which is a sport that has brought nearly as many Englishmen to Ceylon as has that generally more attractive and much larger game, the wild elephant. Strange to say, the boar, weighing on an average not much over two hundred pounds, has proved quite as dangerous and even more formidable in conflict than the huge monarch of these forests. The quick-witted, cool, and experienced huntsman can avoid the giant elephant when he charges,—he is necessarily sluggish on account of his size; but the wild boar is swift, fierce, and armed with tusks sharp as a dagger's point, which he uses with the adroitness and rapidity of a skilled swordsman. Sir Samuel Baker says that he has killed these animals in Ceylon weighing over four hundred pounds each, and has seen them here even much larger. The boar is hunted with trained dogs, and is scarcely ever driven

to bay without seriously wounding and often killing one or more of the pack. The hunter does not shoot at the boar when at close quarters, lest he should kill the dogs hanging to the animal; but the true form is for him to close in upon the fight and bury his long knife in the creature's vital parts. Practiced sportsmen aim to bury their weapon just back of the ears, at the junction of the brain and spinal marrow; death to the boar is then instantaneous. Sir Samuel Baker, who was an inveterate sportsman, had many narrow escapes in wild-boar hunting in Ceylon, and was more than once seriously wounded.

The natives inland, as observed on the line of the railway, live in the simplest and rudest of huts, mostly formed of bamboo frames filled in with clay baked in the sun. The thatched roofs consist, as usual in this country, of large palm leaves braided together, one layer lapping over another, thus effectually excluding even equatorial rains. The eaves come within three or four feet of the ground. There are no chimneys nor windows in these primitive abodes, but the doors, which are always open, admit light and air. The natives only sleep in them; during their waking hours, they are always under the blue sky. Each native builds his own cabin, which rarely consists of more than one apartment. In its erection no nails are used; the several parts are tied together with rattans and stout vines, which become like rope when they are once dry. The climate is so

uniformly warm that many do not even plaster their walls with clay, using palm leaves and boughs of trees to form a sufficient covering. A sheltered situation is chosen, so as to be protected from the weather when the monsoons blow, for these natives have a fixed aversion to the wind and rain. There is a certain harmony between the primitive simplicity of these people and that of surrounding nature. To the casual observer, as he passes over this route between Colombo and Kandy, there is an unpleasant suggestion in the surroundings of possible jungle fever. The thick, low-lying, tangled woods and stagnant pools one would think must be the very home of chills and fever. They would be so considered in continental India, or in the south and west of our own country; yet the people hereabouts do not seem at present to suffer from any special form of ill health. The men are thin in flesh, but muscular and cheerful in aspect. They really seem to enjoy life after their dull, animal-like fashion, though their principal occupation is that of working in the wet rice-fields, an employment which no European can safely pursue. The latter, in fact, never become sufficiently acclimated to be able to live in low and swampy districts in Ceylon without contracting malaria, the effects of which last through a lifetime.

When this railway was being built, the coolies employed in the work died by hundreds from the unwholesome character of the neighborhood, until the

rule was adopted of returning the laborers after the day's work to Colombo to sleep, bringing them back again after sunrise. It is the damp night air which prevails in the lowlands, and its attendant miasma, which proves so fatal. One after another of the European overseers and engineers sickened, and were compelled to return home to England before a restoration to health was effected ; while some, apparently the most hardy, and who took the best of care of themselves, succumbed altogether, and were buried in the island far from their native land. Better drainage and cleared jungles have greatly improved the sanitary conditions. The dense forest has been opened to the influence of purifying breezes and the effect of the genial sunshine, so that there is much less chance for the pestilence to find a breeding-place.

Banana groves, with the trees bending under the weight of the rich, finger-shaped fruit ; tall cocoanut-trees, the tops heavy with the nutritious food they bear ; stout tamarinds and juicy mangoes ; ant-hills, looking like young volcanoes, half as high as native huts ; rippling cascades ; sharp declivities ; glistening pools ; white cranes ; tall pink flamingoes, standing like sentinels on the muddy banks ; an occasional monkey leaping among the trees ; golden orioles, gaudy-feathered parrots, and other birds of dazzling hues, are observed with never-flagging interest from the windows of the slowly moving cars, while on this inland route to Kandy. The marabou, which is so

much prized for its delicate feathers, is occasionally seen stalking watchfully by the shaded pools, seizing now and then upon small reptiles with its formidable bill and devouring them at a single gulp. It seems strange that these birds can swallow with impunity snakes and other vicious reptiles while they are yet alive. One would think that creatures whose bite is often fatal to human beings would under such circumstances cause a fearful state of commotion in a bird's crop. If ostriches, however, can swallow and digest large nails, jackknives, and corkscrews, perhaps the gastric juices of these smaller birds may have special properties to aid them in effectually disposing of poisonous reptiles.

How well our first trip inland in Ceylon is remembered. While watching the novel and intensely interesting sights, the air was heavy with aromatic fragrance, and sweet with the odor of lilies, while a feeling of quiet content stole over the senses, as in a half-waking dream from which one does not desire to be aroused. Was the brain yielding to the subtle breath of those gorgeous lotus flowers, which opened wide their delicate pink petals to the sunshine? This queen of the lily tribe, the lotus, is here seen in two varieties, the pink and the white. They resemble very closely the common pond-lily of our own climate, but are thrice their size. The seeds are a mild narcotic, and are sometimes eaten by the natives to produce that effect. It is said that birds of the

wading family sometimes partake of them until they become stupefied. The seed is about the size of a hazel-nut, and leaves a bitter, puckering taste in the mouth.

The white-ant hills which rise to such proportions here and there in the wooded districts remind us that these minute but marvelously industrious creatures are one of the great pests of equatorial regions, and that they are especially destructive in this island. Attracted by the very dry condition of the wood, they bore holes in the timbers which form the frames of the better class of dwellings, and therein lay their eggs. As soon as the young ants are hatched, they begin to devour the wood, and continue to do so until it falls to pieces. They operate on the inside, avoiding the outer part, proving to be the most stealthy of all aggressive invaders, and their presence is often unsuspected until the mischief is done. The palmyra palm and the ebony-tree furnish the only timber which resists the serious ravages of these white ants. The author was shown a bungalow near Kandy, which was in ruins, where the occupants not long before were one day surprised by the roof tumbling in upon them while they were seated at the dinner-table. The supporting timbers were no longer able to bear their own weight, much less to hold the heavy thatched roof in place, after having been reduced by the ants to a mere shell. One would think that where an abundance of fresh, green vegetation and

ripe fruit are to be had, dry timber could have few attractions as insect food.

One of the species of ants common in Ceylon has been made the subject of careful investigation by competent naturalists, and with extremely interesting results. The conclusions arrived at serve to corroborate previously formed ideas, that of all small creatures the ant is endowed with the most intelligence. Among other singular facts which have been discovered, it is now known that when a conflict occurs between rival tribes of ants, something like a regular military system is observed by them. They march to the conflict in strict order, divided into separate columns, which are evidently under command of different leaders, while the advance is so correctly timed that the attack upon the enemy is simultaneous. This requires mental calculation; instinct does not suffice to fix such matters. During the fight, the ants carry off their dead and wounded to a place of safety in the rear. A large detail, whose members take no part in the actual conflict, work like an ambulance corps attached to a well-organized army. If we were treating the subject in detail, many other interesting facts might be given, showing the remarkable organization which exists among them, and the sagacity of these intelligent insects.

On the island of Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean, the inhabitants protect themselves against the ravages of the white ants, which if permitted would commit

similar depredations upon their dwellings to that already spoken of, by pitting a destructive enemy against them. When it is found that a colony of these termites have invaded a dwelling, the inhabitant knows that he must act promptly, as these creatures have big heads and strong jaws, and they destroy rapidly. He pours some molasses on the ground near by the path by which the white ants move to and fro between their home and the house. The smell of the treacle is sure to attract a bevy of black ants, which species is very fond of sweets. These are the natural enemies of the white ants. They notice the latter passing regularly back and forth, and govern themselves accordingly. In a few hours, a whole army of black ants approaches, marching in a column two yards long. They enter the infected house in large numbers, leaving a reserve force behind, and promptly destroy every white ant in the place. Finally the army marches out, each of the black ants carrying away a dead white one, which, cannibal-like, they devour!

But we are still on the way by rail to Kandy, and not writing a volume on natural history, though in making these notes and with the objects absolutely before one's eyes, the mind—and the pen as well—is apt to follow the natural suggestions of the subject, even at the risk of seeming to diverge from the purpose in hand. The patient reader thus becomes possessed of facts, the communication of which

was quite unpremeditated by the author. Let us take heed, however, not to make such detail wearisome.

On remarking to an intelligent resident of the island, who was a fellow passenger, that no wild animals were to be seen upon the route, he replied that if we were to leave the more thickly settled district and strike into the forest, abundant tracks would be met with of bears, leopards, and elephants. The latter, especially, make broad paths through the jungle by their heavy tread and shambling gait, leveling the undergrowth right and left as effectually as could be done by an army of bushwhacking road-makers. If a small tree impedes an elephant's progress, he puts his broad forehead against the stem, bends it so as to place his foot upon the horizontal trunk, and thus snaps it short off. If it does not yield readily, he winds his trunk firmly about it and pulls it up by the roots, as a dentist extracts a rebellious tooth. As a rule, small trees go down before a fleeing elephant like grass. Buffaloes are found in both the wild and domesticated condition all over the island, but they abound only in their wild state in the northern sections. The untamed buffalo is a dangerous antagonist when assaulted and fairly driven to bay, and many an English sportsman has been killed by them in Ceylon. The bulls are particularly savage and pugnacious, giving battle upon the slightest provocation.

At a point where the cars were stopped for a few moments to obtain a supply of water for the engine, a female monkey was seen among the trees, the mother of twins, holding the little things in her arms and nursing them in a manner so human as to form a most ludicrous picture. Presently, leaving her little ones in a safe place, she came down to the cars, and was regaled from our lunch basket with what to her must have been rare tidbits, supplied from the cuisine of the Grand Hotel at Colombo. As a rule, the monkey tribe avoid Europeans or white men, suspecting treachery, while they care very little for the native people, who rarely interfere with them. The affection of the mother monkey for its young is something very touching. If one of its little progeny dies, the mother still clings to it, sometimes for several days, carrying it about in her arms, until finally some instinct causes her to lay it away, covered with leaves and the tender young branches of the bamboo. Europeans have a cruel way of obtaining young monkeys to take away from the island. It is accomplished by shooting the mother, after which the bewildered little one is easily secured. One of these small monkey orphans was brought on board the steamship in which we left Ceylon, by its cruel captor. It was touching to see how the diminutive creature had transferred its trust and affection from its natural guardian to its present owner, to whom it clung incessantly. Poor little fellow! it was well

that it did not know its new protector to be the sole cause of all its troubles. It proved to be a bad sailor, and was so seasick that it soon died, but it clung to its adopted friend to the last moment, who was, we are glad to say, exceedingly kind to the little waif.

After passing through the low country on the way to Kandy, we began gradually to climb an up-grade. This was at Rambukana, about fifty miles from Colombo, two powerful engines being now required to move even our short train, made up of four cars. The road winds zigzag fashion about the hills, in startling proximity to the deep, threatening abyss, while the ever-changing scenery of the Kaduganawa Pass becomes far-reaching and grand, varied by precipitous declivities, deep green gulches, and falling waters. The shelving rocks are here festooned with climbing plants, daintily enriched by blossoms of vivid hues, and flowering creepers. As one can easily believe, this was an expensive road to build, costing in many parts over a hundred and fifty thousand dollars per mile, but it is most thoroughly constructed on a gauge of five feet and six inches. The gradient in some places is one foot in forty-five. Near the highest part of the line stands "Sensation Rock," from which a grand and startling view is enjoyed, recalling a similar experience on the author's part at "Inspiration Point," overlooking the never-to-be-forgotten Yosemite Valley in California. This Ceylon rock has an evil history, it being, according to tradi-

tion, the spot from which the ancient kings of Kandy ruthlessly hurled their prisoners of war to destruction. This railway is a great success pecuniarily and otherwise. So well has it been managed that in the twenty-two years which have transpired since its completion, but one accident has occurred of any special moment, and no European or American has ever lost life or limb by mishap while traveling upon the road. It is to be feared that we cannot cite a similar instance of any railway in this country.

At last, after a hearty enjoyment of the bold and beautiful scenery for two hours and more, winding snakelike about the steep acclivities, and diving into and out of dark, gloomy tunnels, we landed in the old and picturesque capital of the central province. It is not exactly a city built upon a hill, but it is a city built among the hills.

The region in this line of latitude between the eastern and western coast of the island, particularly in the central province, is one of much grandeur, a country of Alpine heights and deep green valleys. Here dark ravines and plunging waterfalls multiply themselves. Not small, spraylike bodies of water, like many in Switzerland, but fierce, restless bodies of foaming torrents, sweeping headlong over abrupt declivities three hundred feet in height. The system of mountains does not form a continuous range, but consists of a succession of plateaus and of detached mountains rising from elevated bases. Thus, Adam's

Peak, were it to rise to its present height from a plain at about the level of the ocean, would be far more grand and impressive than it now is, with its direct upheaval beginning from so elevated a base. So in the instance of the two famous mountains which rise from the great Mexican plateau, — Mount Popocatepetl, and Mount Ixtaccihuatl, which lose seven thousand feet of the effect of their real height, because their base starts from a plain situated at that elevation above the sea.

CHAPTER XII.

Historical Kandy. — Importance of Good Roads. — Native Population. — Temple of Buddha's Tooth. — The Old Palace. — Governor's House. — Great Resort of Pilgrims. — Interior of the Temple. — The Humbug of Relics. — Priests of the Yellow Robe. — A Sacred Bo-Tree. — Diabolical Services in the Ancient Temple. — Regular Heathen Powwow. — Singhalese Music. — Emulating Midnight Tomcats. — Chronic Beggary. — The Old Parisian Woman with Wooden Legs. — A Buddhist Rock-Temple.

KANDY is a place of more than ordinary interest in Ceylon, on account of its historical relations. It will be remembered that a native king reigned here as recently as 1814. The recklessness, cruelty, and grievous tyranny of this potentate hastened his downfall, causing his native subjects to join the English in effecting his overthrow. The government took forcible possession of the place in 1815, capturing the king and sending him to Bengal as a political prisoner, where he died seventeen years later. The systematic brutality of this ruler was exercised so lately that its detail is preserved, forming a horrible story of barbarous cruelty. One elephant was trained as an executioner, whose duty it was to tread to death any condemned political or other prisoner. Rich and poor, priest and soldier, are said to have rejoiced at the banishment of this tyrant.

When the Kandian kings died, their bodies were



cremated with great ceremony. It was not the same here as it is and was in India proper, where all classes are cremated ; only kings, nobles, and priests enjoyed the privilege in the island of Ceylon. Kandy is still the capital of the central province. All the efforts of the Portuguese and afterward of the Dutch to conquer this mountain region were unavailing, owing to its isolation and its inaccessibility. The town was situated in a valley, guarded by narrow mountain passes which a few determined men could effectually defend. The district was also girt about by tangled forests almost impassable except by birds, wild beasts, and reptiles, the latter being the chronic dread of the European invaders. Only foot or bridle paths existed between populous points along the coast in those days. There were no roads in any direction passable for wheeled vehicles during the possession of the island by the two nationalities spoken of.

The English, after conquering and fortifying the coast, promptly applied themselves to the opening of broad, well-engineered roads in all directions, and especially between Colombo and Kandy, so that bodies of infantry and artillery could quickly reach any desired point in efficient numbers. This changed the condition of affairs most essentially, enabling the new invaders to conquer and bring all parts of the island under military subjection. Since the capture of Kandy in 1815 there have been three rebellious

uprisings of the natives, the last of which occurred in 1847, which the English officials stamped out with such rigor, not to say cruelty, that it has so far proved the last attempt of the sort. Lord Torrington, who was then governor of Ceylon, incurred the censure of the home government for the needless severity of the punishment inflicted upon the natives. The business of road-making between important points has been continued ever since, supplemented by many miles of railway, which has proved to be the most potent agent of progress which could be devised. Thus have been opened to free access rich agricultural and mineral districts, besides promoting intercourse between the natives of the island and the Europeans on the coast. Railways and good inland roads for wheeled vehicles are great promoters of true civilization and progress. Polygamy, which had so long defied the laws of these United States, was a doomed institution when the first iron rail reached the borders of Utah Territory.

The people of this ancient capital are no longer isolated; four hours' ride upon the rail takes them to Colombo.

The same class of natives are met with at Kandy as are seen on the coast, except that there are more shaven-headed priests in yellow robes, one end of which is thrown over the left shoulder, leaving the right arm and shoulder bare. The wearers are marked by a moody, unsatisfied expression. Aside from their office and connection with the temples, these men

command no respect from the people, being generally illiterate and in no wise superior to the masses. They assume the appearance of mendicants in accordance with their religious profession, and are inveterate beggars, but are in fact, we were credibly informed, among the richest natives in Ceylon. They are supposed to live solely on charity, and receive no ostensible remuneration for their priestly services, but they are shrewdly hoarding money all the while like the veriest miser, while their social relations, like their Roman Catholic brethren, outrage unblushingly all priestly rules. There are fewer Parsees and Moormen in proportion to the number of inhabitants. These, being of the trading class, generally seek Colombo or Point de Galle, where they find congenial occupation in supplying strangers with sapphires, topazes, rubies, and precious stones, or oftener with imitations of these, in disposing of which they are notable experts. There is but one piece of advice to be given regarding these harpies, — avoid them altogether.

The principal object of interest in Kandy is the old palace and the far-famed ancient temple of Malagawa, where the precious tooth of Buddha is preserved, and yet it is not very ancient, as the word applies to temples and ruins generally in Ceylon. It was built in the fourteenth century, especially to form a shrine for this tooth, and it is held, mainly on this account, to be the most sacred Buddhist temple in existence. The palace, now partially improved for

government purposes, was built just about three hundred years ago by the Portuguese prisoners captured by the Kandians, which accounts for certain European characteristics about the edifice. It was doubtless once an imposing structure, but of no architectural interest. It faces a broad, level area, where in olden times elephant fights used to take place for the entertainment of the king and his court, — a cruel sport, in which one of the combatants was sure to lose his life, and not infrequently both were fatally injured. The modern Spanish bull-fight is only a degree more cruel, and both exhibitions are equally indicative of the national character of the promoters.

The one residence worthy of mention in Kandy proper is the Pavilion or Governor's House, built by Sir E. Barnes. This is a very elegant modern structure, combining European architecture with tropical adaptations, and is surrounded by a broad colonnade. The house is finished externally in stucco, with a hard polish like white marble, which it much resembles. The neighboring grounds are very beautifully laid out, and are kept like an English park, the view from which is beyond description for its variety and beauty.

The Temple of the Tooth has no claim to architectural beauty. It belongs to no recognized order, and is an indescribable old shrine, low, black, and grimy, surmounted at its eastern extremity by a tower manifestly of European design, which is, doubtless,

a comparatively modern addition. The whole looks more like a spacious stable than an oriental shrine. This temple has made Kandy the Mecca of both India and Ceylon, attracting great numbers of pilgrims annually. It is regarded with such universal reverence that the priests of Burmah and Siam send a personal envoy bearing gifts to it every year, besides furnishing a large sum annually as tribute money. A few years since, an earnest effort was made to gain possession of the alleged tooth, a special mission having been dispatched from Siam for the purpose. These agents came prepared to pay a quarter of a million dollars for the coveted prize ; but the Kandian priests would not part with it at any price that could be named. The temple of Malagawa is a curious establishment, with its gardens, shrines, and fish ponds, the latter well-filled with plethoric turtles and fish of a "sacred" kind, which come eagerly to certain points at the call of the priests, to be fed by pious pilgrims.

The inner walls of the temple are decorated with designs that are anything but cheerful, consisting of paintings intended to depict the various sorts of hells which will be awarded to erring mortals for their special earthly sins. The place absolutely smells of brimstone. The interest of our little party centred most upon some old manuscript books written upon talipot palm leaves in the Pali, Sanskrit, and Singhalese languages. The pages were here and there illus-

trated with what appeared to be appropriate designs, very odd to be sure, but yet not without a certain crude artistic taste. The books were bound in silver open-work covers or frames.

The famous tooth which is made so much of in this mouldy old temple is far too large to have ever come from the mouth of a human being, and is probably that of some defunct elephant or crocodile. Indeed, the original article which it is supposed to represent is proved to have been destroyed centuries since, when by the fortune of war it fell into the hands of the unbelievers. The author did not see the tooth. It was described to him as being deposited in a small apartment upon a silver table beneath a bell-shaped cover, the latter heavy with precious gems. Here, lying within the leaves of a large golden lotus, is the resting-place of the much-venerated piece of ivory. The tooth, duly guarded and with great pomp, is carried about the town once a year, just as the Indian idol, Juggernaut, takes its annual airing from the lofty temple at Tanjore, drawn by hundreds of worshipers.

It is exhibited by the official priests, and only on special occasions, with tokens of profound reverence. It was shown to the Prince of Wales in 1875, and to his two sons in 1882. The author well remembers a personal experience in the crypt of a certain Roman Catholic Church in Italy, where he was being shown a collection of "sacred" relics, pieces of the "true

cross," etc., together with a lot of "holy" vestments rendered heavy by pretended gems of great value wrought into the texture of the clothing.

"Do you," was asked of the attendant priest at the time, "who are so intelligent, believe in the genuineness of these pretended stones?"

"They have their use," was his evasive reply.

"You certainly know that these so-called emeralds, rubies, and sapphires, are of glass and worthless?" we continued.

The answer was a cool shrug of the shoulders and a hasty covering up of the garments. The author knew too much about gems to be easily deceived, and the priest had permitted him to scrutinize them more closely than was usual. The original gems, if real ones had ever been used, had been purloined by priestly connivance, and false stones supplied to fill their place.)

A far more interesting and probably much more genuine relic than the tooth which is so reverently preserved in the Kandy temple is a rudely engraved metallic dish or "alms pot," which is said to have been the personal property of Buddha, — the receptacle for the coins contributed by the mass of the people in charity. The Singhalese priests of to-day carry a similar brass bowl for a like purpose, and are not at all backward in making their demands for contributions from strangers.

These Kandian priests of the yellow robe are low-

bred and ignorant. We speak of them as a body. There are some brilliant exceptions, but as a rule they have few qualities calculated to command respect. Cleanliness with them is also one of the lost arts, notwithstanding the pretended multiplicity of their baths, while their ceaseless habit of chewing the repulsive betelnut and expectorating the red saliva in all directions is extremely disgusting, equaled only by the filthy habits of tobacco-chewers.

We have said that the mouldy old Buddhist Temple of the Tooth at Kandy was the most interesting and attractive object to all strangers, but there is also here a tree, if tradition is correct, so aged and sacred in the eyes of the people as to almost rival the temple in attractiveness. It is an ancient bo-tree, — the sacred Indian fig, — situated in the spacious grounds attached to the temple. It has widely extended, scraggy limbs, is high, irregular in form, and undoubtedly very old. It is as sincerely bowed down to by pilgrims from afar as is the altar in the temple. Its very leaves are treasured with devout care, and the pilgrim counts himself specially blessed who is able to bear one away to his distant home, as a charm against all earthly ills. No one will presume to pluck a leaf of this tree, much as they may crave its possession. The leaf must fall from the branches in its maturity, and of its own volition, in order to yield its maximum of blessings to the holder. Local authority declares the Kandy bo-tree to be the oldest

one living. Its record, they say, has been kept since three hundred years before Christ, or say for two thousand two hundred years. As there is at least one other similar tree in Ceylon for which about the same degree of antiquity is claimed, it may reasonably be doubted if both stories are correct. The other tree is situated among the ruins of Anuradhapura, planted, as its record declares, two hundred and forty years before the Christian era. It is somewhat surprising how universally the extreme age which is claimed for this tree is credited even by the English residents of the island who are familiar with Buddhist chronicles. That both these trees are very old is plain enough, but when we designate time past by the thousands of years, one must be somewhat over-credulous to accord such great antiquity to either of them, or indeed to any object of a perishable nature. And yet there are trees belonging to the locust family, as the author can bear testimony, growing among the West India Islands, declared to be over three thousand years old. This is in part corroborated by well-known visible characteristics of the locust which are clearly defined, and many intelligent arborists credit their longevity. There are thousands of bo-trees planted all over India proper and Ceylon, in memory of Buddha, which are held of a sacred character, and no good Buddhist will cut one down. It will be remembered that Humboldt saw a cypress in Mexico, a league from the capital, in

the Chapultepec grove, which he estimated to be six thousand years old. It does seem as though scientists were a somewhat credulous class.

Services and ceremonies of an appropriate character — that is, in accordance with the faith of this people — are constantly going on in and about the Temple of the Tooth, night and day, all the year round. Our hotel at Kandy was opposite and very near to the old shrine, and night was made hideous for us by the senseless howling of the priests and the notes of the drum, cymbals, and fife, supplemented now and again by the blowing of blasts upon a conch-shell, more shrill and piercing than a fishhorn signaling in a fog. The unearthly noises which issued from the open doors of the temple of Malagawa was something dreadful at midnight, and utterly inexcusable upon any pretense whatever.

“How can these priests and their assistants maintain sufficient interest to keep up this terrible din so ceaselessly?” was asked of a local planter.

“The funds of the temple are ample,” was the reply. “There is a constant flow of rupees into the treasury, and these people are well paid for their services in keeping up the sham.”

“Whence comes the money?” was asked.

“Large sums come from India and from visiting pilgrims, besides which the faithful native Singhalese contribute in the aggregate no inconsiderable amount.”

“Credulous orientals,” was our response.

“You must remember,” was our companion’s reply, “that this edifice and the surroundings, including the bo-tree, is considered the holiest spot in all the Buddhist world.”

The ceremonies which took place within the temple during a brief visit by the author consisted of grotesque dances and the beating of drums and blowing of horns, all without any apparent rhyme or reason. A procession of dirty priests, preceded by a drum and fife, passed hither and thither before an altar upon which incense was burning. No coherence of purpose, however, was exhibited by any one, but each person seemed to be trying to make all the noise and grotesque gesticulations possible. A North American Indian powwow would be a fair comparison to the performance which was witnessed on this occasion. A few pilgrims, after first pouring water upon their hands and feet, purchased flowers from venders who frequent the doors of the temple, and placed them on and about the altar. This was the most sensible and consistent procedure which was adopted by priest or layman inside the temple walls. The flowers were the white blossoms of the frangipani, whose fragrance was oppressively strong. It was a great relief to get outside of the moss-grown edifice, far away from the horrible din and the terribly offensive smell, which permeated not only the place, but one’s clothing for hours afterwards.

There are seven other temples and chapels at Kandy, belonging to different denominations, besides two Buddhist ecclesiastical colleges. The Malwatta temple is worth a visit, it being the most important Buddhist monastery, where all the priests of the order in Ceylon, upon assuming the yellow robe which is their badge of office, come to formally utter their solemn vows. These bronzed priests, in saffron-colored, toga-like robes, followed by an attendant carrying a yellow silk umbrella, are rather striking figures in the thoroughfares of this inland town. In the time of the late king, no one but his imperial majesty and the priesthood were permitted to carry an umbrella, but men with no other covering from the sun but a cloth wound about the hips carry this article in our day, and derive much comfort from the shade it affords.

The less said about what these natives call music the better. Indeed, it would seem as though oriental music was invented only to torment European ears. Ivory horns, tom-toms, fifes, and the rudest sort of bass drums are the instruments most in use with the Singhalese, a few Chinese stringed contrivances being occasionally added, simply increasing the horror. The sounds of the latter instruments resemble most the cries of a pugnacious conclave of tomcats on the rampage at midnight. The query forcibly suggests itself in this connection, as to whether the instrumental music of western civilized people can possibly

sound to these orientals so uncouth and so hideous as do their own performances to us.

In the porch of the Kandy temple and its immediate vicinity, just as one sees in and about the Roman Catholic churches of Europe, are groups of wretched-looking beggars, at all hours, most of whom, after the conventional style prevailing elsewhere, exhibit some physical deformity which is their stock in trade. Some of these endeavor to excite sympathy by thrusting self-inflicted wounds before the stranger's eyes, — wounds which are kept in a chronic condition of soreness by various irritating processes adopted for this purpose. One cannot but be impressed as much through the picturesqueness of the scene presented by the half-naked, ragged, cadaverous throng as by the sad moral which these poor creatures suggest. There are adroit and ingenious beggars all over the globe, and nowhere do they more abound than in the East; individuals amply able to care for themselves, but who prefer to exercise persistent industry and cannibalism, so to speak, in living upon their fellow-men. The same degree of assiduity practiced in legitimate business or useful occupation of almost any sort would insure ample and respectable support. Begging and painted distress are indigenous to all climes.

Who that has ever been in Paris does not remember an old woman, neatly but plainly dressed, who sits daily, rain or shine, at the corner of the Boulevard

Capucine and the Place de l'Opéra. She has sat there for years, and sits there still, with two wooden stumps in place of legs very conspicuously displayed. She does not speak to passers-by, nor does she ever solicit charity, but she accepts with grateful significance the silver and copper coins which are constantly dropped into her lap by a sympathetic public. The average man or woman who is able to be charitable is more or less practically so, and it is gratifying to indulge the creditable instinct. This woman of whom we have spoken had a daughter married not long since, on which occasion she received a dowry from her wooden-legged mamma of fifty thousand francs!

Let us not always be critical; if the object of our charity is really unworthy, then we have given our mite to humanity.

There is a very pleasant drive which the visitor to Kandy must not forget to enjoy. We refer to Hindo Galla, where a unique Buddhist rock-temple may be visited among a wilderness of boulders. There are a score of priests in charge, quite ready to act as cicerones to visitors. The available grounds about the temple are crowded with palms, tree-ferns, and flowers. There is also a fine old bo-tree dominating the place, which attracts the usual devotional attention of all true believers, and concerning the antiquity of which there is the usual amount of credulity.

About eight or nine miles from Kandy on the road

towards Colombo, at the village of Angunawela, is an old Buddhist temple, which stands on the summit of an almost perpendicular rock. This edifice is in excellent preservation, and is a fine specimen of Kandian temple architecture. One is well paid for a visit to Angunawela and its local attractions.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ceylon the Mecca of Buddhism. — The Drives about Kandy. — Fruit of the Cashew. — Domestic Prison of Arabi Pasha. — "Egypt for the Egyptians." — Hillside Bungalows. — Kandy Hotels at a Discount. — The Famous Botanical Garden of Ceylon. — India-Rubber-Trees, Bamboos, and Flying Foxes. — Dangerous Reptiles in the Garden. — The Boa Constrictor. — Success of Peruvian-Bark Raising. — Vicious Land Leeches. — The Burrowing and Tormenting Tick. — Where Sugar comes from in Ceylon.

CEYLON is the classic ground of Buddhism and Kandy is its Mecca, whither trend the devout followers of the prophet in myriads yearly. Rock-cut temples and other shrines are scattered over the hilly portions of the island, some of which are large, some small, but each one having a stone image of Buddha wrought after the conventional pattern. Most of these cave-temples are over a thousand years old, and some are twice that age, overgrown by jungle vines and tall palms. Next to Christianity, Buddhism is the most widely diffused religious institution in existence. Its code of morals, taken as a whole, is as perfect as the world has ever seen formulated. Does the reader understand that most of the great truths and wise axioms designed as rules of life which are prescribed in our Bible are found in the Buddhist scriptures? Above all, let us remember that the followers of this ancient oriental creed, professed at this

writing by one third of the human family, have never shed a drop of blood to make a proselyte.

The drives about Kandy are over the most excellent roads, to follow which is like threading the paths of a continuous garden, while the air is laden with the fragrance of sweet-smelling lemon grass. Home-like, picturesque bungalows dot the hillsides as well as the shores of the lake already described. The roads which lead around the hills afford beautiful views; both far and near, turn where we may, the locality is full of pictures, enduring, and lovely to recall. This especially applies to a perfectly constructed road, known as Lady Horton's Walk, the views from which are indescribably beautiful. It is a broad, winding way around one of the most prominent hills, designed and constructed by the wife of Sir Wilmot Horton. As to the fragrant lemon grass, it covers most of the hillsides in the more open mountain districts of Ceylon, and is particularly abundant in the central province. There is an essential oil produced from this pungent grass which is known in commerce as citronella, a delightful and universally favorite extract. Wild blackberries and raspberries abound in this district. There is a peculiar fruit found here as well as elsewhere in the island, called the cashew, which persists in outraging all our ideas of consistency by producing its nut outside of the skin. This recalls a somewhat similar eccentricity exhibited by cherries in Australia, which have the stone

which forms their seed on the exterior instead of the inside centre, like good, wholesome, well-behaved cherries in our own country. The fruit of the cashew is not palatable, but its juice, when distilled, produces a strong intoxicating spirit. The nuts are edible when roasted like chestnuts.

In one of the large villa-bungalows nestling on the hillside overlooking the verdant amphitheatre of Kandy lived that notable political prisoner, Arabi Pasha, with his ample harem and a host of body servants, forming a bit of Egyptian domestic life transported bodily to this Indian isle. It will be remembered that he was exiled from Cairo by the English about twelve years since, because he was a famous and successful fighting general among his people, his special battle-cry being "Egypt for the Egyptians." One feels a lingering sympathy for a man who fought bravely for the liberty of his country, very nearly conquering the British troops on the sanguinary field of Tel-el-Keber; yet this man deserves more blame than praise, for it was he who recklessly burned Alexandria, and caused a reign of assassination in that devoted city for many terrible days. Though a prisoner like the first Napoleon when held at St. Helena, Arabi has never hesitated to freely express his political opinions, bitterly condemning his conquerors. He is still — and very properly we think — the ardent advocate of "Egypt for the Egyptians," and even in his advanced years would promptly head a rebellion

against English rule in his native land, were he at liberty to do so.

A report has lately been circulated that Arabi Pasha has been permitted to return to Egypt, but as to its truth the author cannot answer.

Each of these hillside dwellings, like that occupied by Arabi Pasha's, covers a large space of ground. They are seldom over one story in height, and have a tall, steep-pitched roof of red tiles or thatch, and wide verandas running entirely round the whole structure, half covered by thrifty creepers and flowering vines. The roof generally reaches beyond the veranda until it ends six or eight feet from the ground. The interior of the dwelling is dark and cool, as the doors and windows all open beneath the shade of the roof. No sunshine can penetrate these dwellings, and consequently there is an inevitable unwholesome dampness ever present inside them.

The population of Kandy amounts to some twenty-two or three thousand, embracing but a few Europeans, — that is, comparatively speaking. Those of the latter class not included in the government departments are mostly interested in tea, coffee, or cinchona raising, in the immediate neighborhood. The Europeans have established two small hotels, or at least they are called hotels; but any one obliged to tax their hospitality for a considerable length of time has our sincere commiseration.

The author's experience on the occasion of his first

visit to Kandy in the matter of hotel accommodation was not especially agreeable. Passing over the abundance of insectivorous annoyances, — centipedes upon the walls, gigantic cockroaches on the floor, and ants upon everything, — it was rather severe to be obliged to remove one's bed from beneath a leaking roof, which admitted a steady stream of water. When it rains in these latitudes, it does so by wholesale; not in little pattering drops, but in avalanches and miniature Niagaras. However, a large tub being produced, we were lulled to sleep by the dull sound of dripping water, to awake next morning and find the receptacle overflowing. The novelty of the situation often smooths over the keen edge of discomfort. The fire-flies that night floated about the chamber in such numbers as to dispute the illuminating power with the primitive light supplied to guests, which consisted of a small button of cork, with a bit of cotton wicking, floating upon a shallow dish of cocoanut oil.

There are several missionary chapels in Kandy, besides an Episcopal church, a library, and a reading-room for public use. Very little visible business seems to be transacted here, but as to the natural surroundings of this inland capital, the scenery, the arboreal beauties, and the floral charms, too much cannot be said in commendation. It seems to a casual visitor to be the most attractive district in the island, forgetting, as every reasonable traveler learns to do, the few local annoyances.

The justly famous Botanical Gardens of Ceylon form a marvel of plant life, and are situated about three miles from Kandy proper. The grounds are entered through a grand avenue of india-rubber-trees, whose tall, widespread branches are heavy with polished dark green, leather-like leaves, vividly recalling the splendid avenue of palms in the public garden of Rio Janeiro, situated behind the tall peak of the Corcovado, — “the Hunchback.” This garden of Ceylon occupies about a hundred and fifty acres, and is surrounded on three sides by the Maha-velle-Ganga. The india-rubber-trees are buttressed by large, exposed white roots, very anaconda-like at first view, showing that this tree draws its subsistence largely from atmospheric air. The roots often spread a hundred and fifty feet in diameter, so twisted and peculiar in shape that the natives call it the snake-tree. The removal of the milk-white secretion by tapping does it no apparent injury, it being a distinct product, flowing in a different channel, it would seem, from the sustaining sap. We were informed that a healthy, full-grown tree might be drawn upon daily for two thirds of the year with good results. The Ceylon species of the india-rubber-tree is not nearly so productive of the peculiar secretion which makes its value as those which are indigenous to South America. Indeed, it is not a native of this Indian island, but was introduced by the Portuguese while they held sway. No attempt is made here to produce

the article known as gutta-percha in commercial quantities, and, indeed, the tree is not sufficiently abundant in Ceylon. The headquarters of this industry are at Pará, on the coast of Brazil, where the product of the india-rubber-tree forms the great staple of the exports, and its collection in the neighboring forests gives employment to a large share of the native population.

This elaborate garden, one league south of Kandy, probably forms the choicest and most extensive collection of plant life in the world. It is, except for the nature of its tropical vegetation, like a well-kept European conservatory or park, ornamented by choice lawns and magnificent groups of trees, special families being arranged together. The average temperature here is recorded at 77° Fahr. This, together with the natural and abundant moisture, insures the very best results. A small stream runs through the middle of the grounds, widening here and there into a tiny lake, where a great variety of aquatic plants thrive luxuriantly, including the gorgeous and ever attractive lotus, together with many other examples of the lily family. This garden has been organized for about seventy-five years, — to be exact, it was opened in 1819, — during which period the original idea has been well adhered to, of introducing by its means such plants as are not indigenous, but which might, if cultivated here, be of real benefit to the inhabitants. Fortunately, it has always been presided over by an

enthusiastic and scientific horticulturist. All kinds of useful vegetation of tropical regions are represented, their nature studied, and a record kept of the same, while seeds, cuttings, fruits, and the like are freely distributed to farmers and planters, European and native. The variety of palms in these grounds is a revelation to the average visitor, as few persons know how many distinctive examples there are of this invaluable member of the arboreal family of the East, some of which are stupendous in size. We have been told that the garden contained two hundred and fifty distinct varieties of the palm, but one may reasonably have doubts as to so large an aggregate. Among them are talipots, palmyras, cocoanuts, the slender areca, the date palm, and the fan palm, already described, spreading out its broad leaves like a peacock's tail. This is often called the traveler's tree, because the trunk is never without a supply of pure water with which to quench his thirst. When pierced with a knife at the juncture of the stems, it yields copious draughts of water. Here one sees palms from Cuba, Guinea, China, Africa, and Brazil, each exhibiting some special characteristics of importance, and all thriving, together with clumps of climbing rattans. These latter, not thicker than one's finger, yet wind about the trees from two to three hundred feet in height, having the longest stem of any known plant. Small groves of nutmegs, cloves, mangoes, citrons, and pepper-trees attract the

visitor's attention, together with budding cinnamon and cardamom bushes ; nor must we forget to mention the fragrant vanilla-tree, which to the author recalled a delightful experience in far-away southern Mexico, where a mountain side near Oxala was rendered lovely and delicious by the profuse growth of this flavoring product of the tropics.

Here and there a tall, thrifty acacia is seen, suffused with golden-yellow bloom in rich profusion. Excepting the California pepper-tree, with its drooping clusters of useless but lovely scarlet berries, the varieties of the acacia are unrivaled as beautiful shade trees. When in full bloom, under the dazzling rays of an equatorial sun, they seem to be all on fire, forming a strong contrast to the prevailing dark green of the tropics.

The flower of the cinnamon-tree is white, and when a range of country containing many acres in bloom comes into view, the effect is very beautiful. The best cinnamon gardens are nearest to the sea coast, and those so situated produce the most pungent bark. On the occasion of our visit, special notice was taken of a group of bamboos in the Kandy garden, the bright yellow stems being over a hundred feet in height, and each stem at the base measuring from eight to ten inches in diameter. It was a native of the spot, and, as we were assured, was a chance development. The rapidity of its growth, which is a remarkable characteristic of this tropical grass, — for

that is its family, — is almost incredible. The cluster here spoken of was a little more than ninety days old, and, as the superintendent informed us, it increased in height twelve inches and more each twenty-four hours. This group of bamboos formed a grove by itself, two hundred feet in circumference, its feathery, misty foliage yielding gracefully to every pressure of the breeze, softly fanning the surface of the still water on whose brink it flourished. The bamboo, like the palm, is one of the most valuable and universal products of the tropics. It would require an entire volume to enumerate the various uses to which these two are applied by native skill. The division of the garden called the fernery is a delightful resort, presenting a collection ranging from the low-growing maiden-hair to the tall tree-fern with broad-leaved, tufted top and declining branches.

One can well understand how easily a botanist may become absorbed in the study of this interesting family of plants. The variety and delicacy of form which they exhibit is infinite, ranging from the minutest specimens, almost like moss, to trees of thirty feet in height, with palm-like plumes. In the famous gardens just outside of Calcutta, the author visited a large conservatory occupied solely as a fernery, in which over thirty thousand specimens were classified.

Mischievous flying foxes abound in the neighborhood of Kandy, proving a serious annoyance to the planters, often taking the lion's share when the fruit

is ripe, always selecting with greedy intelligence the most desirable product of the trees. They move in flocks, a hundred or more together, stopping wherever the food is most inviting. The natives seem to have a mysterious dread of and never touch them, but European hunters sometimes kill and eat them, declaring the flesh to be much like that of the hare. The creature measures nearly three feet between the tips of its extended wings. The flying fox is unable to take flight from the earth, and if found there can easily be caught, nor can they run under such circumstances, but, waddling along, seek the nearest tree-trunk, which they ascend with great ease by means of their long, sharp claws. From the branches they throw themselves with a strong impetus, skimming for considerable distances through the air, like the flying squirrel of the low latitudes, and the flying possum of Australia. This last animal, like the kangaroo, is found only in the country just named, where the natives, having no religious compunctions as to the sacredness of animal life, kill the possum and feast heartily upon its body roasted in hunter's style.

It is not quite safe to walk in the moist and thickly overgrown parts of this garden of Peradenia, — the local name, — as there are dangerous snakes which one is liable to encounter, besides other reptiles of low latitudes, not always poisonous, but best avoided. Professor Haeckel tells us how terrible he found the nuisance of mosquitoes and stinging flies in

this tropical garden. "There are of course mosquitoes certain in all such places," he says, "but far more dangerous than these annoying insects are the poisonous scorpions and millepedes, of which I have collected some splendid specimens, — scorpions six inches and millepedes a foot long." The chameleon is not so common as the last-named creatures to which the professor refers, and is not so noticeable, since its nature is to closely reflect the color of the tree or stone on which it may chance to rest for the time being. They are not liable to be detected unless in motion.

The *tiropolonga*, a deadly snake, the terror of the natives, is often found in this garden. The largest snake in Ceylon is the boa or anaconda, which is often seen here measuring over twenty feet in length. It feeds mostly on small animals, and is very little feared either by the natives or Europeans. It is not an agreeable sight, nevertheless, as the reader may suppose, to see a large boa moving along the ground near one's person, and free to act its own pleasure. Their deadly coil about any animal is almost sure death. The many vivid stories which have been published about the aggressive nature of this creature are, we believe, mostly exaggerations. The poisonous cobra, whose bite is as fatal as that of our dreaded rattlesnake, is much more to be feared under ordinary circumstances. The larger snake must be very hungry and greatly annoyed to induce it to attack any other than small animals like a rabbit or a rat, and

as a rule they avoid the presence of human beings. Nevertheless, a boa will sometimes be seized with an aggressive purpose without any apparent cause. This has been proved in several instances where, after having been freely handled in a museum for months without harm, the creature has suddenly applied its great muscular strength to the purpose of strangling the exhibitor, winding its body with lightning-like rapidity about his throat and body. Under such circumstances, the life of the man has been saved by the instant action of associates, who severed the snake's body in several places with sharp knives. Any other attempted relief would have led to an increase of the strangling process. In one instance, at an exhibition in this country, it was necessary to cut the snake away piecemeal with a butcher's knife before the terrible muscular contraction of its body was relaxed. It was accomplished none too soon, as the insensible victim was already nearly dead, and was only resuscitated after prolonged and skillful effort.

When the coffee planters of this central district were almost in despair at the failure of their coffee crops, owing to the blight already described, the director of the Botanical Garden called their attention to the importance of devoting their lands to other purposes. The possibility of cultivating the cinchona-tree to advantage was suggested, as well as the raising of tea. Both these plans were given a trial, and

were gradually adopted. Now, both industries flourish vastly in Ceylon, to the mutual advantage of the planters and the world at large. The seed of the cinchona-tree is first planted in nurseries, and when a year old the plant is removed to prepared grounds, where it makes rapid progress. The tree does not begin to yield the bark which constitutes its peculiar value until it is seven or eight years old, when a ready market is found for all that can be produced, and at fairly remunerative prices. The latest statistics to which the author could gain access showed that five years since, Ceylon was exporting sixteen million pounds of the medicinal bark annually, an aggregate which would rival nearly any South American port, Peruvian or otherwise.

While in this vicinity, one of our party was bitten in several places on the lower limbs by what proved to be land leeches, a species of this small creature which lives in dry grounds and also upon trees, burrowing in the bark. From the proportions of a darn-needle, this active and somewhat venomous little pest swells to the size of a pipe-stem, when it becomes filled with blood. Their bite often creates a painful sore, especially if one's circulation happens to be in an unhealthy condition. To protect themselves against this abomination, Europeans wear what are called leech-gaiters, reaching up to the knees, made from stout, close-knit canvas, or russet leather. The true water leech also abounds in the marshes and ponds of the

island, and is quite destructive to animals which frequent these places. Domestic buffaloes seek the ponds in which to submerge their bodies to get rid of stinging flies and voracious mosquitoes, but they sometimes lose their lives by the combined attack of these more formidable enemies, the water leeches. After one of these bloodsuckers is fairly fixed upon the body of man or beast, it will not give up its hold until it has drawn its fill of blood. When this condition is reached, the leech drops off, and, like a snake after a hearty meal, it becomes dormant for a long time.

There are plenty of reptiles in all parts of Ceylon, but, as we have said, they keep mostly hidden from human beings. The gardens and woods are infested with ticks, so called, resembling small crabs, and armed with similar forceps with which to torment their victims. One almost requires a microscope to see these little black atoms, though they possess gigantic ability to inflict painful and highly irritating bites. This insect quickly buries itself under the skin, where it creates a lasting sore unless it is thoroughly eradicated, together with the poison that surrounds it. The natives use cocoanut oil as a preventive to the attack of the ticks, and it is true that they will drop from any spot where they encounter this pungent lubricator. In some parts of Ceylon, the leech pest is so prevalent as to render whole districts quite uninhabitable by human beings.

At Kandy as well as in the vicinity of Point de Galle, frequent attempts have been made to establish sugar plantations, but the soil or the climate, or both, proved to be unfavorable to the growth of the cane. Natives, here and elsewhere, raise a few hills of it about their cabins, which they chew for its sweetness, when the stalk becomes sufficiently ripe; it is especially the delight of children, under this condition. With the aid of proper fertilizers there would seem to be no good reason why sugar-cane could not be profitably grown in Ceylon.

The species of palm familiarly known as the jagery palm is largely cultivated in the central province of the island. Its sap is boiled down so as to produce a coarse brown sugar, which is much used by all classes in its crude state. Why it is not refined for more delicate purposes, since the sugar-cane is not available, it is impossible to say. Farina is also extracted from the pith of this palm, forming, as is well known, a very palatable and nutritious food. The indolent natives must be spurred by foreign enterprise into obtaining this valuable article of export, before they will labor to procure it. Open-handed Nature, in her bounteous liberality, spoils these heedless children of the tropics.

Near Kurunaigalla, one of the ancient capitals of the island, situated about sixty miles northeast of Colombo and ten or twelve miles north of Kandy, there are some very interesting ruins, together with

several enormous boulders of red rock, which somehow strike one as being very much out of place. They are too enormous to have been transported by glacial action, by which method we account for the position of so many big boulders in the northern portions of our own continent. One of these in the neighborhood we are speaking of is called "The Elephant's Tusk," towering six hundred feet into the air; but why it is thus named is not obvious. There are very old plumbago mines hereabouts, and a group of mouldering stone lions, elephants, and a figure designed to represent that fabulous creature, the unicorn. These recall somewhat similar groups one sees in the wilds of continental India, mementos which are believed to antedate by ten or fifteen centuries the origin of the famous "buried cities" of Ceylon.

CHAPTER XIV.

Fifty Miles into Central Ceylon.—Gorgeous Scenic Effects.—Gampola.—The Singhalese Saratoga.—A Grand Waterfall.—Haunts of the Wild Elephants.—Something about these Huge Beasts.—European Hunters restricted.—An Indian Experience.—Elephants as Farm Laborers in Place of Oxen.—Tame Elephants as Decoys.—Elephant Taming.—Highest Mountain on the Island.—Pilgrims who ascend Adam's Peak.—Nuera-Ellia as a Sanitarium.—A Hill Garden.

FROM Kandy to Nuera-Ellia — “Royal Plains” — (pronounced Nuralia) is a pleasant drive of fifty miles through the Ramboda Pass, which is justly celebrated for its series of beautiful waterfalls and boisterous rapids, affording frequent views of great magnificence. It is safe to say that in this respect it is the most remarkable part of the island. The entire route is about six thousand feet above sea level. At first the course of the Maha-velle-Ganga is closely followed, the river being crossed at Peradenia by a somewhat remarkable bridge, consisting of a single arch or span of a little over two hundred feet, built of satinwood, with stout brick and stone abutments. The bridge was erected in 1832, without the aid of a single nail or bolt, and is apparently in perfect condition to-day. The railway bridge crosses the stream below this point not far away, resting upon three substantial stone piers. The centre of the first-

named structure is raised between sixty and seventy feet above the ordinary flow of the water, which is generally of quite a placid character, but at certain seasons of the year its volume and force are such as to form a sweeping and dangerous torrent. When this is the case, there are often borne upon the flood large cocoanut and other trees, which have stood for many years upon the river's banks, until thus undermined by the swift-flowing waters. The effect is then very singular. The trees, which have thus been suddenly transported from their birthplaces in a growing and often fruit-bearing condition, pile themselves up after a most extraordinary fashion, forming what is technically called a "jam."

The hillsides, as seen from the satinwood bridge, are terraced with rice-fields, while in the distance stands the Allegalla Peak, an isolated mountain thirty-four hundred feet in height, in connection with which there are several Singhalese legends, each one more or less impossible. This element, however, only makes the stories all the more palatable to the native appetite.

This route takes one through Gampola, which, though it is insignificant enough at the present time, was the native capital of Ceylon nearly five hundred years ago. The place is situated amid a grand panorama of magnificent hills on the banks of the river already named, which is here crossed by a suspension bridge. The road from this point to Neura-Ellia

begins to ascend the hilly region along the face of steep acclivities and precipitous banks. One can nearly reach Neura-Ellia by rail, but the route we have described is by far the most interesting in point of scenic effects.

This is a Singhalese watering-place, the Saratoga of the island, the one popular health resort of the wealthy natives, as well as of strangers and English officials whose headquarters are on the sea coast. It is situated a little over one hundred miles eastward from Colombo, at an elevation of nearly seven thousand feet, while the surrounding mountains are between one and two thousand feet higher. The English government has established a sanitarium here for invalid soldiers, and a small detachment of infantry is always stationed on the spot, more for form than because of any real necessity. It is a region where cool, gray skies and frequent rains prevail, and where a fire is needed most of the year, and indeed it is almost a necessity after sunset at all seasons. The thermometer never rises above 70° Fahr., and the average temperature is 60°. The change from oven-like Colombo in midsummer to the air of this invigorating region is truly delightful. When the author was at Neura-Ellia, early in January (being at our antipodes, it was then summer in Ceylon), the weather was lovely, his companions were cultured, appreciative, and sympathizing, and everything joined in producing a store of delicious

and lasting memories. The strong, invigorating mountain breezes were most enjoyable after a period of oppressive heat endured on the coast. The locality recalled a somewhat similar experience in passing from Calcutta to Darjeeling, an English sanitarium near the foot of the Himalayan range of mountains, overlooking the plains of Hindustan on the one hand, while on the other affording a view of that series of mountains whose loftiest point, Mount Everest, forms the apex of our globe, its cloud-capped, sky-reaching summit being nearly thirty thousand feet above the level of the sea.

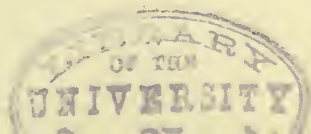
There are several fairly good hotels at Neura-Ellia, two banking-houses, a church, a clubhouse, and a large number of private cottages scattered about the hills and valley, overlooking a lake of some two miles in length and a mile in width. This has been stocked with trout, and now affords a liberal supply of that palatable fish to the residents.

Not far away, on the Fort McDonald River, there is a grand waterfall, with a plunge of three hundred perpendicular feet into a dark and narrow chasm. The river approaches this point over a long succession of wild, swirling, and foaming cataracts, reminding one of the rapids above Niagara Falls, though far inferior in breadth and the body of water which they convey. The hoarse anthem and echo accompaniment of the McDonald Falls, when heard for the first time, are truly awe-inspiring.

One has not far to go in the surrounding mountain region to find the haunts of the wild elephants. They are still to be met with in considerable numbers, their capture being considered the great achievement of the chase among hunters of large game. From here Hindustan has drawn its supply of these animals for many centuries. The elephant rarely breeds in servitude while domesticated for the use of man, but in its wild state is a prolific animal, otherwise Ceylon would long since have been cleared of them. The mother elephant carries her infant twenty-two months, and after birth suckles it for two years. The female does not attain her maturity until she is fifteen years old; the male in his twentieth year. The mother elephant gives birth to but one calf at a time; twins have never been known. Small herds range these hills to a height of six thousand feet, where the nights are often frosty and the cold quite severe. Though they are natives of tropical regions, this animal seems to be but little affected by the cold, always avoiding, when it is possible, the direct rays of the sun. This peculiarity is noticeable in them even when they are exhibited in our cold northern climate. Unless aroused by the hunters and driven from deep, cool coverts in the dense forests, the elephant remains hidden during the daytime. Their roaming for forage and water, like that of most wild animals, is altogether nocturnal. Their sustenance is principally the leafage of young shoots of trees, the wild fig being

their favorite. The tender roots of the bamboo also form a large source of food supply. Rice, however, is the elephant's choice above all other esculents, and sometimes a small herd will devastate a whole plantation in a single night. The planters generally build a bamboo fence about their rice-fields in the districts liable to be visited by these animals. This would at first thought seem to be entirely insufficient to keep off so powerful a creature, but the fact is that a wild elephant in Ceylon is so wary that he will not trespass upon land thus guarded. Some instinct teaches him to avoid the place and to seek for food elsewhere. A simple rope drawn about a field, it is said, will keep him at a distance. He shrewdly suspects a trap, and has seen so many of his comrades seized upon and carried away into captivity by means of corrals, traps, and ropes, that he has learned to associate the idea of capture with such things, and is constantly on the lookout lest he also fall a victim to the stratagems of the huntsmen. It is common to consider one hundred years as the average period of an elephant's life, but the author has seen an animal doing service in India which was known to exceed this limit by a score of years.

European sportsmen, attracted to Ceylon in search of this big game, sacrificed the elephants in mere wantonness until government interfered, and a heavy fine is now imposed upon any one who kills an animal of this species. There is no danger of the na-



tives doing anything of the kind. In the first place they have not the inclination, and in the next they are not permitted to own firearms of any sort. Some rich and reckless Englishmen, nevertheless, kill an occasional elephant simply for the sake of boasting of their prowess, and pay the government fine accordingly. We say the natives have no inclination to hunt the elephant, but the wild Veddahs do sometimes kill them. The animals of this species found in Ceylon are of a distinctive breed, with some marked differences from those native to Africa, and are noted for their high degree of intelligence. They are most prized in India, where they are used by those who can afford to keep them. The intelligence of this monarch of the forest is shown in his selection of the most available paths for passing from one part of the country to another. Major Skinner, the famous road-builder of Ceylon, tells us how invaluable he found the tracks of the elephants as a guide in laying out his government routes through the island. He says the most available crossings of hills, valleys, and rivers were already distinctly marked by elephant paths, and he followed them with entire confidence that his engineers could do no better for him, with all their experience, aided by the most accurate instruments.

The Maharajah of Jeypoor, India, whose generous and regal hospitality the author has enjoyed, sends elephants to bring his invited guests to visit him, and

also returns them to their residences in the same manner. The animals which were employed on the occasion referred to came originally from the Kandy hills in Ceylon. They were docile creatures, which knelt at the word of command for us to mount to the frame seats on their backs. Each carried six persons besides the driver. We were told that it costs as much to feed one elephant as to keep eight horses. This independent prince has a territory about the size of Massachusetts, with a million and a half of contented subjects. His capital — Jeypoor — is the finest and most thrifty native city in all India, where, wonderful to say, there are no beggars, nor, so far as a transient visitor could discover, nuisances of any sort to complain of. It was a dusty season, as is well remembered, but the streets and squares of the capital were being carefully sprinkled by native water-carriers, — in a very primitive manner, to be sure, but showing a due consideration for the comfort of the public.

There is a vast difference between a tame and a wild elephant ; the latter, when entirely subdued and domesticated, is of comparatively little consequence. His main occupation in our country is that of eating peanuts, candies, and fruit doled out to him by visitors to the menageries, and the performance of a few highly sagacious tricks. In their wild state they are the wariest and most cunning of all the denizens of the forest. Nor are they dévoid of courage and fero-

city when brought to bay, and many experienced hunters have lost their lives in Ceylon while pursuing them. When domesticated in this island they are of great service to the farmers, especially in plowing, harrowing, and rolling the newly broken land. A cultivator which would anchor half a dozen yokes of native bullocks is walked away with in the easiest manner imaginable by a single elephant. They are particularly sagacious in dam-building across streams, and in the construction of bridges, placing the heavy materials just where they are required, and even fitting large logs and stones in their proper places. The amount of food which so large an animal requires is, however, a serious drawback to their employment. Besides five or six hundred pounds of green fodder, an elephant must eat at least twenty pounds of some kind of grain daily, rice preferred, to keep him in working condition. They are usually seen, in their wild state, in small herds of ten or twelve, the majority being females, and generally each one has a calf or baby elephant by her side. There are also certain males, known as "rogues," that roam the forests singly, generally vicious old creatures, discarded by their companions, and always bent upon mischief. These are desperate in the extreme, often courting a conflict with the hunters, fiercely charging them right and left. Why they have been excommunicated from the ranks of their former companions cannot be known, but they are always avoided, both by the natives and

by hunters. No attempt is ever made to domesticate a "rogue" elephant. They recognize that they are forever ostracized from the fellowship of their kind, and make no attempt to join other elephants. The theory is that they have become permanently crazed.

It is well-known that all elephants are liable to brief periods of delirium, during which they are very dangerous. When the symptoms of such an occurrence begin to evince themselves, their keeper, always prepared for such an event, doubles their chains and otherwise securely confines them until the paroxysm is over. The recovery is hastened by a brief period of starvation, neither food nor drink being given the animal until he becomes entirely docile.

For a considerable time, there was an understanding that the rogue elephant might be hunted and killed, when such an one made his appearance, but this liberty was taken advantage of by sportsmen, and when they killed an animal he was represented to have been a rogue whether he was really so or not, and the authorities were therefore obliged to enforce the law as regarded all these animals.

The Ceylon elephant is not of the ivory-producing species, though some of the males do develop good-sized tusks like those of Africa. The animals of this island have short "grubbers," as they are called, protruding from their mouths eight or ten inches, with which they uproot certain species of their favorite food, such as the tender undergrowth of the juicy

bamboo. Had the Ceylon elephant been an ivory-bearing animal, he would probably have been more closely pursued by the hunters, and have long since disappeared from the island, which is so much more accessible than the wilds of Africa, whence the world's supply is now almost wholly derived.

Strange to say, the elephant in his domesticated or tame state takes absolute pleasure in acting as a decoy to enable the hunters to capture wild ones. After the pursuers have, with the tame elephant's help, driven the wild animal into a corral or stout inclosure in the forest, and have also, still aided by the tame elephant, secured the wild one by tying his two hind feet securely to some stout tree, he is left for a day or two to strain and fret himself until he has fairly worn out his strength, before he is again approached. Almost the entire process of breaking in or training a wild elephant is that of starvation. When at last his spirit is completely broken and his strength gone for the time being, he becomes amenable to discipline, almost as much so as one which has been in captivity for years. He then partakes with eagerness of the food and water which is brought to him, accepting the same as a sort of peace offering, and gradually becomes attached to the keeper who has charge of him, and with whose presence the creature associates the idea of relief and comfort. From this time forward, firmness and kindness complete the taming process. It is a mystery how and where they die in their wild

state. No corpses are ever found, except of those which have come to a violent death by the bullets of the hunters. It is seldom that the animal is now shot. This is only done in extreme cases, as a live elephant is so much more valuable than a dead one that the object is now to corral them, tie them up, and tame them.

The mountains encircling Piduru Talagalla are covered with trees to their very summits, from a distance seeming to be wrapped in a rich mantle of deepest green. This elevation is the loftiest on the island, considerably exceeding Adam's Peak, the legendary apex of Ceylon, a conclusion arising from the fact that the latter is to be seen from the ocean before any other portion of the island, and long before the lighthouse of Colombo is made out from on ship-board. The dense forest in this region contains many wild animals besides elephants.

A high degree of religious importance attaches to the act of ascending Adam's Peak, which is situated fifteen miles south of Neura-Ellia. Consequently, at certain seasons of the year, the mountain side is covered with pilgrims, who camp there during the night, and perform their religious devotions on the summit during the day. A special effort is made by the pilgrims to reach the top so as to see the sun rise, and to meet its first rays upon bended knees in devout prayer, like the ancient fire-worshippers. Steps are cut in the steep, rocky sides of the precipi-

tous ascent, to overcome the abruptness of which, here and there, requires the aid of chains, which are fastened securely in the solid rock for this purpose. Judging from the style and condition of these, they have probably been in use for centuries. Religious faith must be all-absorbing with a people, to bring them such distances from northern India to bow down to a supposititious footprint in Ceylon.

All Eastern people are famous for making distant pilgrimages to what are considered sacred places, and especially Buddhists, who attach immense importance to such performances.

Before leaving Neura-Ellia, let us say a word as to its fitness for invalids, since Ceylon is becoming more and more of a resort for such persons, especially those afflicted with weakness of the lungs. It may be fairly questioned if this locality be not too damp for pulmonary invalids. It is very often wrapped in cold, dense clouds for many hours together, so that the air is heavy with a sort of Scotch mist. Still, the place is growing, and many persons have great faith in its sanitary importance. The number of English cottages is increasing, and the hotels are well filled in the summer season. The cost of living at this resort in the hills is so great that only those who have long purses can afford it. Rents are high, and domestic articles of consumption cost about double what is usually charged at Colombo, whence nearly all table provisions are brought.

Six miles from here is an interesting hill garden, designed to supplement that already described near Kandy, and which is under the same able management. Flowers do not receive much attention in either of these conservatories, useful and remarkable trees taking precedence of all other forms of vegetation. Here one sees some examples of the goraka, with its stem and branches quite yellow from the gamboge which they exude; tall ferns like baby palms, fifteen feet in height; and other peculiar trees clad in crimson bloom or blossoms of snowy whiteness, together with some hardy fruits.

On approaching the coast, one often meets with what is called the screw pine, but which, it would seem, should be called the screw palm. It bears sword-like leaves, similar to the South American yucca, and is decked with blossoms of wonderful fragrance. The most peculiar characteristic of the tree, however, is its aerial roots, which are thrown from the trunk above ground, but when they reach the soil they take root in it and serve as props to the delicate stem. The effect is grotesque and artificial.

CHAPTER XV.

Port of Trincomalee. — A Remarkable Harbor. — How to get there. — Nelson's Eulogium. — Curious and Beautiful Shells. — Pearl Oysters. — Process of Pearl Fishing. — What are Pearls and which are most valued? — Profit to Government. — A Remarkable Pearl. — Tippo Sahib and Cleopatra. — The Singhalese not Sailors. — Ancient Ruins. — Hot Springs near Trincomalee. — "Temple of a Thousand Columns." — Valuable Supply of Ship Timber. — Salt Manufactures. — Tenacity of Life in the Shark.

It was long thought that Trincomalee, situated on the northeast coast of the island, should be the commercial capital of Ceylon, because of the excellent harbor facilities which it possesses, but various circumstances turned the tide in favor of Colombo. Tradition tells us that Trincomalee was founded by a colony of Malabars, many centuries before Christ, antedating all authentic records relating to the island. The earliest historic mention of the place refers to the existence here of an ancient and very sacred Sivaite temple. Other traditions touching the same period refer to a Tamil kingdom on the opposite side of the island, ruled over by an Amazon princess, whose capital was at Kudremale, where granite ruins, still plainly discernible, give some authenticity to the story. Where Fort Frederick now stands, at Trincomalee, was formerly the site of one of India's most sacred shrines, whither pilgrims flocked annually from

afar. The harbor is remarkable for its depth of water, together with its ample size and security against all sorts of weather which may be raging outside of its limits. The entrance is between Fort Frederick on the northwest and Foul Point on the southeast, and is over five miles in width. As a strong current along the coast sets constantly to the southward, there is always some trouble in making the port.

Trincomalee is situated about one hundred and eighty miles by land from Colombo. The best way to reach it from the capital is by embarking in a coasting steamer, which occupies ten days in making the complete circuit of the island. Inland travel for long distances is not enjoyable, and unless one has special purposes to subserve, it is best avoided. The short and principal routes are, however, comparatively good. There are a few rest-houses, as they are called, owned and kept up by the government, where the traveler can find a shelter beneath which to sleep, but that is about all; bed and bedding he is supposed to carry with him. It is the same in India proper. Hotels are to be found, as a rule, only in the large cities. One must depend upon his own resources in traveling over this island, when off the beaten tracks, and must carry along his domestic necessities.

Nelson, without due consideration we think, declared the harbor of Trincomalee to be "the finest in the world." The place has a population of about

fifteen thousand, and is the most important English naval station in the East, with an extensive dock-yard and marine workshops for the refitting of large war-ships. But as to the harbor being the finest in the world, that is an extraordinary and an unwarranted expression. One is inclined to doubt if Nelson had visited Sidney, Australia, Rio Janeiro, Brazil, or Nagasaki in Japan, when he pronounced that eulogium upon Trincomalee. Hongkong, China, which name signifies "good harbor," is infinitely superior to this vaunted port of Trincomalee.

In the year 1672, during the possession of the island by the Dutch, a French squadron surprised and took possession of the place, but the Dutch immediately retook it.

The beauty, scenery, and general excellence of this harbor are undoubtedly worthy of special mention. It is dotted with verdant isles, and is securely landlocked, so that when the heavy monsoons may be sweeping furiously along the coast, all is as calm inside of Fort Frederick as an inland lake. Like the harbor of Sidney, the entrance is dominated by two rocky headlands, but they are much farther apart. The harbor has such depth of water as to enable vessels of heavy draught to lie close to the shore and discharge or take in cargo without the aid of lighters. This is a very unusual advantage in Eastern waters. When the English took the place from the Dutch, they added to the fortifications, intending that it

should be the naval port of the island for all time. It is the best harbor of refuge in all India at this writing. One cannot but anticipate that England, in the near future, must enter upon a great struggle to maintain her hold of India. It may be from a well-organized uprising of the native tribes, or it may originate from some outside nationality, seconded by the natives themselves, but come it will, sooner or later. Then the importance of Trincomalee as a naval station will be realized, while Colombo, as a fortified depot, will be shown as second only to Malta and Gibraltar. Trincomalee, it should be remembered, is four hundred miles nearer to Calcutta than Colombo.

Scientists have found the harbor and immediate neighborhood of Trincomalee remarkable not only for the reasons already named, but more especially for its unique shells and interesting forms of marine life. There are several groups of animals found here which creep upon the bottom of the sea, and which are elsewhere unknown. All alongshore one sees a queer little fish, three or four inches in length and of a dark brown color, which has the capacity of darting along the surface of the water, and of running up the wet stones with the utmost ease and rapidity, as well as of creeping across the damp sand. It climbs the smooth face of the rocks in search of flies and other insects, adhering to the surface so firmly as to resist the assault of the on-coming and receding waves.

These little amphibious creatures are so nimble that it is almost impossible to catch them with the hands. The coast on this side of Ceylon has long been celebrated for the beauty and variety of the shells which it produces, of which immense quantities have been sent to various parts of the world. Pearl oysters are found here in large beds, though they are obtained in greater abundance farther north of Trincomalee, at a point ten or twelve miles off the coast. Here, at a certain spot, beds have existed for thousands of years, and are annually dredged for, or we should rather say, dived for, by organized companies. Pearl oysters are also found in large numbers in the Gulf of Manaar, between this island and the continent of India. The season chosen for the pearl fishery, which gives employment to large numbers of the natives, is naturally when the sea is most calm, that is, between the termination of the northeast and the commencement of the southwest monsoons. This period occurs in March and the early part of April, when a fleet of pearl fishermen may be seen anchored at the pearl banks, as they are called, all under the supervision of a government officer, who controls the operations.

The reader hardly requires to be told that these pearls for which Ceylon is celebrated are found secreted within certain non-edible oysters. The interior of this species of mussel is lined with a beautiful transparent material called mother-of-pearl, which is

gathered and sent by the ton to Europe for delicate ornamental purposes, especially for inlaid work. Sometimes one of these pearl oysters will contain two or three valuable pearls, then a score or more may be opened containing none. The divers work rapidly when engaged in this peculiar business, fifty seconds being the average time during which one can remain under water without coming to the surface for breath. They descend by attaching a heavy stone to their feet, the weight of which causes them to reach the bottom quickly, where they rapidly gather all that can be got of the pearl oysters, in so brief a period, into a wide-mouthed net, which is taken down with them. At the proper signal, those who remain in the boat draw up the net, while the diver, kicking off the stone from his feet, comes to the surface with the speed of an arrow. In addition to the pearl oysters, all sorts of curious marine animals, sea-slugs, black, greasy, and hideous polypi, together with beautiful variegated shells, come up in the diver's net. He works too rapidly while at the bottom of the sea to discriminate as to the substances which he gathers. After a few brief moments of quiet rest, inflating his lungs to the full capacity, the diver descends, to again repeat his efforts "fathoms deep."

Extravagant stories are told of these experienced pearl divers, representing them as able to remain below the surface of the water for four or five minutes. This is simply impossible. We were assured

by intelligent local authority that a minute and a quarter, that is, eighty-five seconds, is as long as the best divers can remain below, the average being considerably less. If the reader will try the experiment of holding his breath under the most favorable conditions and while not otherwise exerting himself, he will realize how very brief is the time in which he can refrain from using his lungs. The greatest depth at which the pearl oyster can be secured by the divers is thirteen fathoms. This is nearly eighty feet, at which point the pressure of the water is so great that the divers not infrequently bleed at the ears on coming to the surface. It is curious to realize that these gems which are so highly prized are composed of ninety per cent. of the carbonate of lime.

Pearls found in the Gulf of Persia have the highest reputation, but it must be a shrewd expert who can see any decided difference between those which come from that region and these of Ceylon. Pearls are most valued throughout India which have a slight golden blush or faint rose tint, a prevailing characteristic of those found on this coast. Such are esteemed above the finest white specimens, while the pure white, if it has the proper lustre, is the European favorite. A true connoisseur in pearls in this country rejoices in the rose-tinted specimens of the gem. All colors are found on the coast of this island, — pink, brown, and jet black.

The men employed on the coast of Ceylon are generally Tamils and Moormen, who are well paid for their somewhat arduous services, as wages are considered in this region, besides which, there is but a short period in the year during which they can work at this occupation. Sometimes they enter into a coöperative engagement, sharing, that is, in the possible profits of the season, but as a rule they prefer to receive prompt and sure wages, and to run no risk as regards emolument. At this writing, there is a scarcity of pearl oysters at the old beds, both in the Gulf of Manaar and off the northeast coast. The pursuit of them has been so eager and exhaustive that these bivalves have been nearly exterminated. With a wise purpose of restoring their former abundance, the English government, which always keeps a business eye upon the pearl fisheries, lately declared a "close season," and in the mean time the valued pearl-bearers can increase and multiply undisturbed. The pecuniary profit accruing to the government of Ceylon from the pearl fisheries amounted in 1891 to over a million rupees, while the result of some seasons' operations has far exceeded this sum.

Not long since, a remarkable pearl was found on the northwest coast of Ceylon, — remarkable for size and perfection of color, — at a point where the pearl-fishing industry has been followed for thousands of years. It would be natural to suppose that a very

choice and valuable gem of this sort would be sent to Paris, Vienna, or London, to find the readiest and best market for its disposal, but this was not the case. It was sent to Calcutta, where it realized to the owner a fabulous sum, promptly paid by a native Indian prince, who retains and would not part with it for any price. A valuable string of Ceylon pearls ornamented the neck of Tippo Sahib, when he fell at the storming of Seringapatam. We are also told that the pearl swallowed by Cleopatra so long ago, when she drank to the health of Mark Antony, came from this island.

The space over which the oyster banks extend on the northwest coast of Ceylon is over twenty miles square in the lower part of the Gulf of Manaar. If the oysters are gathered when too young the pearls are small, almost valueless, and therefore a system of survey is carried on by the English government. Buoys are regularly placed, within which, and nowhere else on the banks, is fishing permitted during the regular season set apart for the purpose. Some of the poorest of the natives eat the pearl oyster, but it is neither palatable nor wholesome. Perhaps a thousand years hence, people will be expatiating upon the beauty of these most attractive gems of the Indian Ocean, and natives will be diving for them.

It seems to be rather extraordinary that with so available a sea coast, the Singhalese proper are in no wise a maritime people. Beyond being good fisher-

men and good managers of boats of their own peculiar construction, they have little or nothing to do with the ocean. They scarcely ever embark as seamen for a long voyage, and have no ships of their own. According to the records of Ceylon, this has been the case from the earliest period. The Singhalese have ever been essentially an agricultural race, a small portion devoting themselves to such simple handicraft as life on the island demanded. They are not traders, even in our day. Moormen, Syrian Jews, and Parsees monopolize that occupation, and the few 'longshore sailors are all of the Tamil race.

The immediate district of Trincomalee is not populous, though the soil is rich and the means of irrigation are abundant for a large number of rice plantations. It is dependent upon other places for its constant supplies of rice, fruits, and various necessities, which are brought from along the coast both north and south. Were it not for the presence of the military and the occasional visit of English squadrons, it would be nearly deserted. Sir Emerson Tennent, thirty years ago, prognosticated great things for Trincomalee, but it will be very long before it can come into competition with Colombo. The break-water was not in existence at the latter port when Sir Emerson wrote. That important structure, with other harbor improvements, has settled the question as to which shall be the permanent commercial centre of Ceylon. There are several hot springs, eight miles

from the town, known as the Wells of Kannyā. More than ordinary interest attaches to this supply of hot water because of the absence of all signs of volcanic action in the neighborhood. These hot springs, in addition to the hygienic properties claimed for them, are much resorted to by the devout, as they are dedicated to Kannyā, the mother of Rawana. Those who have lost near and dear friends by death come to the wells to perform certain appropriate ceremonies. Hot springs equally remarkable are found at or near Bintenne, Batticaloa, and also at Badulla. The water of these flowing hot wells is said to be pure, and of such temperature as to be fit for cooking. The natives of Ohinemutu, New Zealand, boil their vegetables and meat in similar springs, as the author can testify from personal observation. The ruins of a temple dedicated to Ganesa show that this vicinity was once, ages ago, the resort of worshipers of that god of wisdom. This elephant-headed deity would seem to be an especially appropriate one for worship in Ceylon, if any dumb animal is to typify such an idea. In any instance, it does not seem so repulsive as the serpent worship still in existence near Jaffna. Special medical virtues are claimed for the waters to which we have referred, — the hot wells. It is stated that fishes actually live in them where the temperature is 115°. Ten miles north of the city are the largest salt works of the island, the product of which is nearly all exported to Calcutta. Fifty thousand bushels

have been produced at Nillavelle alone in a single season, though the "pans" are simple clay embankments, the construction of which involves but little labor. The process of obtaining salt is to expose shallow quantities of sea water to the intense rays of the sun. Evaporation is rapid in these tropical regions. The saline crystals remain, and are gathered from the pans.

It is recorded that an extensive range of temples dedicated to Siva once existed here, but were leveled to the ground by the Portuguese, who employed the stone material thus obtained for the building of the local fortifications, in which stones crop out here and there, bearing elaborate carvings and other evidences of having originally served some other special purpose.

The few official buildings in Trincomalee are substantial and serviceable structures, but the town is poorly arranged, and not very interesting to a stranger. Even the bazaars are unattractive, though these places in the East are always a study of local life. A few Hindu temples give an oriental appearance, and, as we have shown, the place is of great antiquity. It was once the site of a famous shrine, visited by hordes of people from all parts of continental India, which is reverentially mentioned in early records of the island as the "Temple of a Thousand Columns." The author believes this to be the one destroyed by the Portuguese, the material of which served them for building purposes. Unfor-

tunately, this is in the midst of a malarial district, and is consequently avoided by Europeans, except those whose official connections compel them to live here. Trincomalee, however, has some great advantages as a commercial port which cannot be ignored. The proper clearing of the surrounding jungles in the near future, and the introduction of a system of modern drainage, will eventually remedy this evil, at least in a considerable degree.

The neighboring district affords an unlimited supply of the valuable teak timber, suitable for ship-building, together with ebony, satinwood, ironwood, and other choice woods available for cabinet work, which are exported in certain quantities, though not to a large amount. The ironwood-tree is so named from its intense solidity and durability. It also forms a highly ornamental tree when growing, and is planted in large numbers near the temples. No one can fail to admire its broad white flowers, which are marvelously fragrant, and the rich, polished green of its foliage. It has another striking beauty common to several species of tropical trees, namely, the young leaves and shoots are so red as to clothe the tree at times with a rich mantle of crimson, almost rivaling in effect the magnolia-like blossoms. Hereabouts, but particularly to the northward on the Jaffna peninsula, the palmyra palm is found in profusion, with its black straight stem crowned by a thick sheaf of pinnate leaves. This tree is said to live three hundred

years. Of all the varieties of the palm, the palmyra, with the exception of the date, has the widest geographical distribution. The Tamils have a proverb to the effect that "The palmyra lives for a lac of years after planting, and lasts for a lac of years when felled."

An observant person occasionally notices a handsome, thrifty tree with dark and abundant foliage, which bears a fruit as large as a lemon and of the same color. Though this fruit resembles an orange and looks quite tempting to the uninitiated, it is dangerous and to be avoided, for within its pulp lies the seed which produces the deadly poison known as strychnine. The natives believe it to be an antidote to the poisonous bite of the cobra, but doubtless it would prove equally fatal.

There is no deficiency of fruit trees in this north-western district. The jack especially abounds with its valuable product, each one of which weighs from ten to twenty pounds. The tamarind also thrives, and yields its fruit without care or thought on the part of man. Here and farther north the blue lotus with lilac petals is sprinkled over the ponds and lakes in vast quantities.

There are some extremely interesting and mysterious ruins not far inland from Trincomalee, which show remains of handsomely carved stone work, such as the capitals of tall monoliths, but of whose real history nothing is known. Even legend fails

us here, and groping conjecture is at fault. Two thousand years and more have passed away since these structures were reared. Not only have the temples, monuments, and palaces once existing here nearly crumbled into dust, but it is even forgotten who their builders were. What a comment upon the pride which gave them birth. What lessons history teaches us touching this folly. Egyptian kings, ages ago, built pyramids to contain their mummified bodies; in the nineteenth century of our period, these mummies are sold to European museums as curiosities.

The salt marshes and lagoons in this vicinity are famous for the multitude of aquatic birds and waders which frequent them. Among these the prevailing species are egrets, herons, sandlarks, and plovers, while in the jungle great numbers of the pea-fowl are to be met with at all seasons of the year. The Ceylon pea-fowl, of which we have before spoken, is remarkable for its size and the beauty of its plumage. It is unmolested by the natives, but Europeans find the flesh palatable and nutritious. All this country is stocked with a great variety of small birds, such as finches, fly-catchers, thrushes, and the ubiquitous sparrow, as well as their natural enemies, eagles, hawks, and falcons, — birds of prey which exhibit most wonderful sagacity in seeking for victims with which to appease their appetites. They remain securely hidden until a small bird is seen upon the wing, when they dart towards it with a rapidity quite im-

possible for the human eye to follow. In a moment after the rapacious bird is first seen, it is again observed sailing leisurely away to make a meal upon the quarry clasped in its talons.

Though sharks are known to be common all along the coast of the island, still in the harbor of Trincomalee they are particularly so, where the huge saw-fish also abounds, from ten to twelve feet in length, including the powerful weapon from which it derives its name. Many lives have been sacrificed, first and last, to the man-eating sharks in this beautiful harbor and along the neighboring coast, where Europeans have been tempted to bathe in the cool, refreshing waters of sheltered inlets. Some tragic stories are related to the stranger as to the murderous doings of these monsters of the deep. It is a singular fact that the dreaded sharks rarely if ever attack the natives, and so far as we could learn no lives are sacrificed to them by the pearl divers in the season of their operations. The author has observed the same discrimination exercised between the whites and the blacks by this destructive creature in the waters of the West Indies. Inhabitants of St. Thomas, for instance, dive for sixpences thrown into that land-locked harbor, with entire immunity from danger, but certainly no white man would dare to bathe in the same place. Knowing that sharks abound in the neighboring waters, one actually hesitates when tempting the negro lads to dive for coins, though assured that the sharks never molest them.

So also at Aden, situated at the mouth of the Red Sea, the copper-colored natives of the straits of Bab-el-Mandeb dive with entire confidence in those waters, for silver coin thrown from the ship's deck; but were the body of a European sailor to strike the water, it would be devoured by the sharks in a moment; at least, so we were assured by our captain. Like the tiger and the crocodile, it is said that a shark which has once tasted human blood neglects henceforth all other sources of food supply in order to watch for the bodies of men, women, and children. A shark has been known to follow a ship closely five thousand miles across the ocean, from San Francisco to Yokohama. The identity of the creature was established by the fact that a part of a whale-lance protruded from its body, showing that it had been wounded in some former encounter with seamen, perhaps in their effort to rescue a comrade from its terrible jaws.

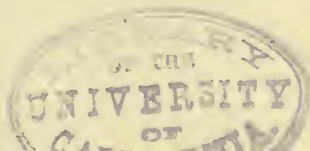
It may be proper to mention in this connection that the shark referred to was finally captured before entering the harbor of Yokohama, by means of a stout line and shark-hook baited with a large piece of salt pork, and was promptly dispatched.

A special industry among certain natives in the vicinity of Trincomalee is the collection and classification of marine shells, which they do with a certain degree of scientific knowledge. They are placed in neatly made satinwood boxes, and either sold to visiting strangers or shipped to European markets.

Sometimes the covers of the boxes are beautifully inlaid with small shells. The profusion and variety of these mineral sea flowers of Ceylon have long been known. Conchologists visit the island solely to collect examples of their favorite study. An earnest and intelligent collector might add many treasures of species heretofore unknown, or rather undescribed, by employing a dredge from a common boat, just off the northeast shore of the island.

The edible oysters obtained hereabouts are really enormous, measuring eight inches and more in length, and four or five in width. Such giant oysters are not so inviting to the palate as those found on our own shores, but they are cooked and eaten both by the natives and by European residents. The natives make great use of shrimps or prawns, which they mingle with other ingredients in forming their favorite dishes of rice and curry.

The tortoises taken on this shore are thought to yield the best and finest shell for combs. It was necessary, in behalf of a spirit of humanity, to promulgate a law forbidding the roasting of tortoises alive, and taking off their shells during the process, which was done in order to obtain the shell of a finer lustre than is yielded after the animal's death. It seems that a people whose religion forbids the taking of life even in the case of the meanest insect can draw the line at fish, and, calling the tortoise a fish, can proceed to be thus outrageously cruel.



Tortoise-shell forms one of the most universal and attractive items of native manufacture, and great skill is evinced by the natives in the production of combs of various shapes, together with bracelets and charms, the latter often mounted in silver. The workmen of Trincomalee and Point de Galle have made a specialty of tortoise-shell manufactures since the time of the Romans. Strabo, the Greek geographer and historian, speaks of this. The pale yellow shell is the rarest and most expensive. Like the choicest jewels, specimens of this sort find the best market in continental India, but the home consumption of shell combs is enormous; every male Singhalese of any pretension in the southern part of Ceylon wears one, and the majority wear two in their long, straight hair.

The manner of dress among the Singhalese, the mode of wearing their hair, and the assumption of shell combs by the men afford singular evidence of the unchanging habits of an Eastern race. Seventeen hundred years ago, Ptolemy, speaking of these people, designates the same peculiarities which exist to-day. "The men," he says, "who inhabit Ceylon allow their hair an unlimited growth, and bind it on the crown of their heads, after the manner of women." It is also curious that this custom should be confined to the Singhalese of the southwest coast near Colombo. It is not a custom of the interior, or of the northern portion of the island.

Almost every stranger, upon first landing at the capital, speaks of the effeminate appearance of the men. With their delicate features, their lack of beards, their use of hair-combs and earrings, together with the wearing of an article of dress almost precisely similar to a petticoat, it is often difficult at first to distinguish them from the other sex.

CHAPTER XVI.

Point de Galle. — An Ancient Port, now mostly deserted. — Dangerous Harbor. — Environs of the City a Tropical Garden. — Paradise of Ferns and Orchids. — Neptune's Gardens. — Tides of the Ocean. — Severe Penalties. — Floating Islands of Seaweed. — Fable, like History, repeats itself. — Chewing the Betelnut. — An Asiatic Habit. — All Nations seek Some Stimulant. — Soil near Galle. — Cinnamon Stones. — Diamonds. — Workers in Tortoise-Shell. — Millions of Fruitful Palms. — Sanitary Conditions of Galle.

NEXT to Colombo, Point de Galle, with a population of about thirty-three thousand, is the most important town in the island. The port is somewhat difficult of access, and requires a local pilot to effect a safe entrance, owing to the fact that there are several sunken rocks very near the narrow channel. It is a treacherous harbor, as all seamen trading upon this coast are well aware, and has, first and last, swallowed up many a gallant vessel. Those early navigators, the Phœnicians, the first really commercial people of whom history informs us, made voyages to and from this port, and more than one authority identifies it with the Tarshish of the Scriptures. Ptolemy speaks of the Avium Promontorium, — “The Promontory of Birds,” — which marks the entrance to Galle, and here the Arabians, in the reign of Haroun al Raschid, came to meet the junks from China, and to interchange merchandise with them.

Sir Emerson Tennent, after describing the charming first view of the place when he landed here, says: "Galle is by far the most venerable emporium of foreign trade now existing in the universe; it was the resort of merchant ships at the earliest dawn of commerce. In modern times it was the mart of Portugal and afterwards of Holland; and long before the flags of either nation had appeared in these waters, it was one of the entrepôts whence the Moorish traders of Malabar drew the productions of the remoter East with which they supplied the Genoese and Venetians, who distributed them over the countries of the West."

It is quite different at Point de Galle to-day. A significant state of dullness reigns supreme in the ancient port, while the town seems to be in a Rip Van Winkle sleep. How the early navigators so successfully avoided the rocks and shoals of this coast, how they managed to weather the confusing tides, hurricanes, and monsoons, is a mystery, while so many of our stoutest ships, guided by experienced seamen, and protected by all modern appliances, have been lost in the same tracks. Is it possible that we of to-day are no better navigators than those who sailed the Indian Ocean three thousand years ago? Were the voyages of Columbus and his followers across the Atlantic in small, half-decked caravels, miracles, or was the waste of waters so much less tumultuous four centuries ago? A few steamships still make of this place a coaling station, but these grow less in number annually,

though to maintain this small branch of business every facility is freely given by the local authorities. If it were not that the English officials devote all available pecuniary means and their tireless energy to the advancement of the business interests of Colombo, quite to the neglect of Point de Galle, the rocks which impede the entrance of the latter port would long since have been treated to a liberal dose of dynamite. Strangers express great surprise that these rocks, which could so easily be demolished by well-known and inexpensive means, should still be permitted to threaten navigation. We have seen a record of thirteen steamships, up to January, 1893, which were wrecked and entirely lost at various times, in attempting to enter the harbor of Point de Galle. This is the more surprising because of the general promptness of the English government in liberally furnishing all possible marine improvements to her distant colonies.

The town is finely situated, crowning a steep, narrow, and rocky promontory, on a bay opening to the south. The name Galle means, in Singhalese, "a rock." The place is facetiously called, on the coast, the metropolis of false stones and real glass gems. The snug harbor is bordered by tropical vegetation to the very water's edge, including an endless number of palms. The town is divided, like Colombo, into European and native sections ; the promontory, jutting southward, is entirely occupied by the former, and is

called the Fort. The immediate environs of Galle form a natural tropical garden, over which botanists never fail to grow eloquent, both on account of its variety and its abundance of floral gems. One striking beauty in this connection is the marvelous development of the fern family, which is here seen as a low-growing creeper, and from that size to the proportions of considerable trees, the feathery fronds varying from lace-like consistency and size to that of broad and beautiful leaves of various shades of green. As to orchids, the hothouse climate of Ceylon develops them in marvelous beauty, both in the jungle and in the open fields. Nowhere else has the author seen the extensive and interesting family of ferns in such a state of thrift, except in New Zealand.

The climate is equable, damp, and hot, thus forming a paradise for ferns and orchids, which revel in their very opposite styles of beauty. There are less than twenty degrees variation between the warmest day and the coldest night of the year at Galle. The rankness of the vegetation surrounding the town, and also its undrained, swampy character, render it in some degree objectionable in point of health to Americans and Europeans, though it is not nearly so much affected in this respect as Trincomalee, where chills and fever always prevail more or less among the foreign population.

Extensive and many-colored coral reefs lie at the foot of the rocks which border the promontory in the

harbor of Galle on the south and west. The natives put this beautiful marine product to a very unromantic use. Gathering it by the ton, they pile it up on the shore, mingled with wood and dried seaweed, and burn it to powder, thereby producing the lime with which the betelnut is mixed for chewing, as well as employing it in the mortar used for building purposes. Among these coral reefs one may see at any stage of the tide, when the sea is calm, a similar display to that which delights the visitor at Nassau, in the Bahamas, — submarine gardens, where various colored animate and inanimate objects (if we may thus signify the difference between animal and vegetable life), such as curiously shaped fish, shells, and rainbow-hued anemone, form beneath the sea kaleidoscopic pictures. Conspicuous among other varieties one sees the blue medusa, twelve inches and more in diameter. Here also is the curious globefish, with its balloon-like body and prickly hide. The clear waters of the Indian Ocean show the bottom, lying four or five fathoms below the surface, in charming colors and forms, like a well-arranged flower garden, hedged about by strange water plants. The floor of the sea, so to speak, is here studded with highly colored coralines and zoöphytes. The observer will see swimming near the surface the queer “flower parrot,” so called, a fish having horizontal bands of silver, blue, carmine, and green, with patches here and there of vivid yellow. Verily, these Ceylon fishes

display an oriental love of color. So strong was the light from above that the hull of our small rowboat cast its dark shadow fathoms deep upon the clear, white, sandy bottom.

These attractive marine spots where orange-yellow and emerald-green mingle with ruby-red, and which are called coral gardens, we have never seen surpassed, and only equaled in beauty of effect at Nassau. The enchanting marine fauna and flora of the Indian Ocean are indeed marvelous to one accustomed only to the cold, sandy ocean-bed of northern latitudes. About three fourths of all kinds of seaweed are now classed as animal, like the sponge, the coral, and the sea-anemones; only one fourth are vegetable. Professor Rene Bache tells us that the most thickly populated tropical jungle does not compare in wealth of animal and vegetable life with a coral reef. On the continental slopes, long stretches of bottom are actually carpeted with brilliantly colored creatures closely packed together amid forests of seaweeds.

There is so slight a rise and fall of the tide on the coast of Ceylon that it is scarcely perceptible, never exceeding four feet and rarely over three, but there are certain strong currents to be encountered on both the east and west coasts, whose velocity is augmented by the prevailing monsoon, and which cause some variations in the tide, besides materially interfering with shore navigation.

No delights are wholly of a piece. All pleasures are qualified by some inevitable conditions; temperate indulgence, even, has its price. As he who enjoys with enthusiasm the delights of a tropical garden has also to encounter the attacks of vicious mosquitoes, wiry land leeches, stinging flies, biting scorpions, and poisonous cobras, so the naturalist who dives among these submarine coral groves to secure specimens, and to enjoy the marvelous sights below the surface of the sea, meets with inevitable drawbacks. The millepora which float there burn him like nettles; venomous fish sting his naked body, and sea-urchins penetrate his flesh with their lance-like spines; while the jagged points of the beautiful coral wound his hands like the aggravating thorns on roses. These wounds inflicted beneath the water sometimes entail serious consequences, creating painful sores which last for weeks.

Off this southern coast of the island wide-spread moving fields of brilliantly colored seaweed are seen at times, dense enough to form quite an impediment to the progress of native boats which do not successfully avoid them. So compact are these collections of vegetable matter that they seem like a field of marshy land, rather than like a floating substance. This weed gives shelter to many species of mollusks and zoöphytes, quite similar to a collection of seaweed often encountered in the waters of the West Indies. Over this marine verdure hover great flocks

of ocean birds. Now and then one alights to secure some tidbit of edible substance detected by its keen vision amid the thick branches and leaves. This mass of rockweed, so called, seems to come from the Indian continent at the north, but the natives have a theory that it is the cast-off growth of submerged islands, loosened from its native soil by the chafing of the restless sea after the raging of a severe storm. So the Singhalese have their "Atlantis;" fable, like history, repeats itself. Plato tells us of a vast island or continent, so named, which suddenly sank into the sea with a vast population, nine thousand years before his time.

The natives here, and at Singapore, Penang, Colombo, and along the Asiatic coast generally, when not sleeping or eating, are incessantly chewing the betelnut, which, as before intimated, gives to their teeth and lips a disagreeably suggestive color, as if they were covered with blood. The men, and some of the women also, carry the means for this indulgence about them at all times, secured in the folds of their one garment wrapped about the loins. They inclose a piece of the nut in a bit of green leaf, after adding a portion of quicklime, and thus form a quid which they masticate with great earnestness, expectorating the while as a person does who chews tobacco, for which it is an Eastern substitute. Sometimes the mass is permitted to rest for a while between the gums and the cheek, and though it is

known to occasionally produce cancer of the mouth, the natives give it not a second thought. The betelnut is a tonic, though very little if any of the nut is swallowed, nor is the saliva which it produces. In some cases cardamom and pepper seeds are added to the quid to give it pungency. It is claimed also that this combination counteracts malarial influences, forming a preventive against fever, which attacks natives as well as strangers in the lowlands. This habit becomes inveterate with the Singhalese, just as smoking or chewing tobacco does with those addicted to the weed. The men here would rather abstain from food than from chewing this stimulating compound. It is said that Europeans who have contracted the habit afterwards give it up with equal difficulty. It is not alone the lower classes who chew the betelnut. Persons of good social standing do it, — priests, native officials, ladies in their boudoirs, and so on, just as some American women are addicted to the secret use of cigarettes, wine, or liquor.

The practice of chewing the betelnut is so ancient in Ceylon, and along the coast of India proper, that the Arabs and Persians who visited these countries in the eighth century, or say a thousand years ago, carried back the habit to their country, where it is still more or less prevalent in the sea-coast district.

Thus mankind, civilized and barbarian, seek some stimulant other than natural food and drink. In Europe and America, where tobacco is easily ob-

tained, it serves the purpose with the majority. In Peru, the Indians universally chew the leaves of the coca for the stimulating effect it produces. In China, opium takes the place of tobacco to a certain extent, while in the region of which we are writing, the betelnut yields a mild stimulant and sedative combined. The Ceylon and Malacca men eagerly substitute tobacco when it is to be had, and sometimes mix it with the betelnut. No gift to the savages of the Magellan Strait is so acceptable or so eagerly sought for as tobacco. The natives of Terra del Fuego, half-starved and almost wholly naked in a frigid clime, will exchange anything they have for a few dried plugs of this seductive weed. If you meet a North American Indian in the wilds of the far West, the first thing he asks of you, with extended hand, is "toback." The Japanese imbibes the subtle stimulus of tea in excessive quantities; the people of the equatorial regions get tipsy on palm toddy; the Chinese make a bedeviling liquor from distilled rice; the Mexican gets his intoxicating pulque from the agave plant; grapes yield the fiery brandy used by French and English people; hops and malt stupefy the Germans; while corn and rye whiskey turn men into brutes in this country.

Immediately inland from Point de Galle, the surface of the ground rests upon a stratum of decomposed coral, and collections of sea-shells are found buried in agglutinated sand in situations raised far

above the level of the sea, corroborating the supposition that Ceylon has been gradually rising above the ocean for many ages. The soil hereabouts is of a deep red hue, caused by the admixture of iron, and, being largely composed of lime from the comminuted coral, it is extremely fertile, producing certain crops of great luxuriance, yielding sometimes two and even three harvests annually. At Belligam, a short distance eastward from Galle, there is a large detached rock, two thirds of which is composed of the gem known as cinnamon stone. It is carried away in pieces of considerable size for the purpose of extracting and polishing it for ornamental uses. The author has seen, near Fort Wrangell, Alaska, a similar conglomerate of garnets, an interesting evidence of the erratic freaks of nature. The cinnamon stone is a crystal of a rich yellowish-brown tint, but little prized in Ceylon. As soon as such stones are found in large quantities they drop in market price; it is rarity which makes their value. When moonstones were first brought to the notice of Europeans, they were nearly as expensive as opals; now, they are sold by the pound or the hundred, for a few shillings the lot. Were all the diamonds to be put upon the market which are hoarded by certain large European dealers, those precious stones would diminish one half in value. Fashion and scarcity are the standards of value.

When we hear the topaz mentioned, we recall a

stone of a pale, golden hue, which is its most common aspect ; but in Ceylon, where it is very abundant, it is found in every variety of color, — amber, brown, red, blue, and sometimes having yellow and blue mingled in the same stone, forming a harlequin gem.

Galle has a large population of Moormen among its residents, who are generally dealers in gems, or engaged as manufacturing jewelers and practical lapidaries. As workers in tortoise-shell they have acquired great facility and exquisite skill. Calamander and sandal woods, ivory and ebony, are also wrought into delicate forms by these people, who are excellent cabinet-makers, and who with a few rude tools turn out very admirable work, imitating any desired model which is furnished for the purpose with admirable fidelity and beauty.

One of the pleasant excursions from Galle is by a fine road leading southeast among the undulating hills near the coast. The spot is known as the Hill of Wackwelle, is surrounded by cocoanut groves, and is often the resort of picnic parties from the port. A very fair house of refreshment is kept here, and the view from the elevation is extremely fine, embracing the valley of the Gindura, which winds its devious course to the sea near to Galle, irrigating the low-lying rice-fields, by means of artificial canals, for many miles. The mountain range of the central district is in full view.

South of Galle, along the shore to Dondra Head,

the southern extreme of the island, the coast is lined with grand cocoanut palms, whose annual product is truly immense. Near to Belligam, situated on a bay of the same name, is a statue dedicated to an Indian prince, who is said to have taught the Singhalese the importance of cultivating this beautiful and profitable tree. Belligam is a large Singhalese village, inhabited mostly by fishermen and farmers, numbering perhaps four thousand souls, among whom are few if any Europeans. A beautiful feature of the shore in this neighborhood is the numerous river-mouths which empty into the sea from out the dense cocoanut woods. The bay is rich in corals and beautiful shells. Belligam was a famous resort of devout pilgrims in olden times, and there is still an ancient Buddhist temple here which is much visited by people from afar. In no other part of the world does the cocoanut palm flourish more luxuriantly than it does in this district. One intelligent writer estimates that the province lying between Dondra Head and Calpentyn contains between ten and twelve million fruitful palms. The productiveness of the cocoanut is most extraordinary. As long as the tree lives, it continues to bear; blossoms and ripe nuts are frequently seen on it at the same time. The natives have a saying here that it will not thrive beyond the sound of the human voice, and it is very certain that it is most fruitful and flourishing among the native cabins, where there is

plenty of domestic refuse to enrich the ground about its roots. The fertilizing principle is not to be forgotten even in tropical regions.

This recalls the astute saying of a profound philosopher, who declared that Providence always turned the course of large and navigable rivers to run by big towns.

As regards healthfulness, the region round about Point de Galle can hardly be commended, and there are some local features not to be forgotten. Elephantiasis prevails among the natives, and leprosy is by no means unknown. Goitre is not uncommon among the native women, Europeans not being affected by it. In Switzerland, where the people so frequently suffer from goitre, it is attributed to drinking snow water; but some other cause must be found for its prevalence here. The most singular thing in connection with the strange guttural protuberance which this disease develops is that females only are liable to it; at least, this seems to be the case in this island. That leprosy is on the increase in Ceylon cannot be denied. There is a leper hospital four or five miles from Colombo, where between two and three hundred poor creatures afflicted with this disease are supported by the government. Besides this fact, it is well known that scores of lepers wander about the capital unrestrained. This is a serious reproach to the authorities. Published statistics show that there are nearly two thousand lepers living upon the island.

One other matter, in this connection, requires prompt attention. Vaccination should be made compulsory. In common with ignorant people wherever found, the Singhalese and Tamils object to this process of protection from what sometimes proves to be in Ceylon a sweeping pestilence before it runs itself out. The records of the island show terrible fatality from the visits of smallpox in past years, which might easily have been prevented.

CHAPTER XVII.

Dondra Head. — “The City of the Gods.” — A Vast Temple. — A Statue of Solid Gold. — A Famous Rock-Temple. — Buddhist Monastery. — Caltura and its Distilleries. — Edible Bird’s Nests. — Basket-Making. — The Kaluganga. — Cinnamon Gardens. — “The City of Gems.” — A Magnificent Ruby. — The True Cat’s-Eye. — Vast Riches hidden in the Mountains. — Plumbago Mining. — Iron Ore. — Kaolin. — Gem-Cutting. — Native Swindlers. — Demoralizing Effect of Gem Digging.

AT Dondra Head, which is now only a small fishing village, the mouldering remains of a grand and ancient temple are seen, which are believed to antedate those of Anuradhapura, though probably built by the same race of people. It is well known that this locality was the annual resort of multitudes of devotees, from the remotest ages. Indeed, such was its sanctity that two thousand years ago it was called *Devi-nuwara*, — “The City of the Gods.” Ptolemy describes the place as being the most renowned point of interest, for pilgrims, on the island. There was a temple here, built by the Hindus in honor of Vishnu, so gigantic that its dimensions sound to us almost fabulous. Some of the finely carved columns which were once part of the structure are still extant, though partially covered with jungle grass and tangled vines. “So vast was this temple,” says an ancient historian, “that from the sea it had the

appearance of a large city." Tradition says that this shrine contained a thousand idols of stone and bronze, and that there were a thousand Brahman priests attached to it besides five hundred dancing-girls. We need not be surprised at this, since these trained performers still form part of the equipment of all temples in southern India, doubtless constituting priestly harems.

These items are recorded by a Moorish traveler, John Battuta, who visited the spot six hundred years ago. The same authority further tells us that one of the most sacred idols was life-size, that is, as large as an average man of his period, and was made of pure and solid gold. "The eyes consisted of two rubies, of such lustre that they shone like lanterns." The Portuguese first looted the temple, putting its devotees to the sword, and then entirely demolished the edifice, leaving it a shapeless mass of ruins. Over two hundred granite monoliths, with many finely sculptured stones, still remain to testify to the original character of this marvelous building.

About fifteen or twenty miles from Dondra, there is an ancient and famous rock-temple after the style of that at Dambula, already described. It is called the temple of Mulgirigalla, the place being still a sacred shrine kept up for the benefit of the faithful. The rock of which it is a portion rises over three hundred feet above the level of the surrounding plain, the summit crowned by a large dagoba contain-

ing relics of some Buddhist saint. On the face of the crag below, there is a series of buildings still occupied by the priesthood. The temple consists of several chambers or artificial caves, decorated, after the usual manner of these shrines, with crude paintings and stone statues. After twenty centuries of consecutive occupancy, the place is still devoted to its original purpose. A Buddhist monastery exists upon the crag, conducted by white-haired priests like those of Kandy. Close at hand are the tombs containing the ashes of the cremated high priests who have lived and died upon the spot, during so many ages, in the service of the temple. Had the old crag a ready tongue, what curious stories it might reveal of its past history, depicting strange events which no pen has ever recorded.

At Caltura, situated on the coast between Galle and Colombo, about thirty miles from the latter, in the midst of a district crowded with cocoanut-trees, the distillation of arrack is carried on quite extensively. Caltura is, and has long been considered as, a sanitarium in the south part of the island. It is swept at all times by sea breezes from the southwest, and is surrounded by delightful scenery. The temperature averages from ten to fifteen degrees cooler than Colombo. This point was considered of such special importance by the Dutch that they erected elaborate fortifications here, the ruins of which still form a prominent feature of the place. There are



several caves hereabouts where a species of the swallow — known as the “swift” — constructs the edible nests so much valued as a table luxury in China. Neither the native Singhalese nor the other inhabitants of the island make use of these nests as food; in fact, they require to be manipulated by expert cooks, in order to bring out their peculiar properties. We are told that centuries ago the people of this nationality came to Caltura to obtain these nests, so much valued as a table luxury by the Mongolians, carefully transporting them to Peking and Hongkong, where great prices were, and still are, realized for them. The edible nests are held to be the choicest dish to place before the emperor. The best and most glutinous product of this species of bird comes from Java, Borneo, and Sumatra, and the shores of Malacca Straits, generally. Caltura is also famous for the manufacture of fancy baskets of various shapes, made from palm leaf, rice straw, and lemon grass. They are put up in nests of a dozen in a package, one within another. These baskets find many purchasers among those who come to the island, who are glad to carry away a souvenir of their visit. Here the traveler will see that rare and favorite fruit, the mangosteen, flourishing, and, so far as we could learn, it is one of the few districts in Ceylon where it is to be found.

On returning from Adam's Peak, visitors often descend the Kaluganga in boats to Caltura. The

distance from the coast to the summit of the mountain is about sixty-five miles. The country through which the river passes is by no means thickly populated, but intersects some native villages and towns, such as Hanwella and Avissawella, together with numberless rice plantations and thrifty cocoanut groves.

This river, like nearly all in Ceylon, is more or less infested by alligators. Like the tortoise and the turtle, they deposit eggs in the sandy banks of the stream, where they can mature by the heat of the sun. A certain species of the monkey tribe is very partial to new-laid alligator eggs, and is on the watch much of the time to discover the mother when she deposits them. After she has ingeniously covered them and returned to her native element, the monkey feasts royally upon the eggs, and he knows where to come again on the following day for a renewal of the feast. As the alligators are not often disturbed by man on this island, were Nature not to place some check upon their breeding habits, they would soon overrun it. The Ceylon leopard, as it is called, feeds upon the monkey, so that *his* tribe may not become too numerous.

The natives, who are believers in the doctrine of metempsychosis, often express the wish that their post-mortem fate may be to reappear in the shape of monkeys, because, in this land of perpetual summer, the wild, free wood-life of that creature seems to them so delightful. The tribe is a large one, and exhibits a great variety in Ceylon, from tiny objects like dolls

to gigantic fellows which would give Du Chaillu's gorillas odds, and beat them out of sight. Bishop Heber speaks of a Ceylon monkey that attacked a huntsman friend of his, and broke his gun-barrel! One of the ridiculous fables connected with the island's history is to the effect that in ancient days, "when time was young," Ceylon was invaded and conquered by an army of monkeys. The mendacity of these old legend-makers is equaled only by their fertility of imagination. The more the credulity of the natives is taxed, the better they like the fabrication, and we have no doubt that there are many comparatively intelligent islanders who absolutely believe this story of a conquering army of chimpanzees. The Kaluganga is altogether a beautiful waterway, but little inferior to the Rhine in breadth and volume. It is improved for transporting rice, areca nuts, choice cabinet woods, and other inland products to the coast. Lake Bolgodde, near Caltura, is the resort of innumerable waterfowl, and, being so near the ocean, both salt and fresh water birds are represented. Hither come European sportsmen to obtain good shooting. There are some sugar plantations in the neighborhood, but, as we have remarked, the cane does not flourish in any part of the island. Continuing along the coast northward, we come to Morottu, about fifteen miles south of Colombo. There the Cinnamon Gardens commence, and extend nearly to the capital, forming a wilderness of green. The surround-

ing atmosphere is very sweet and fragrant with the soft breath of buds and flowers, not belonging, however, to the cinnamon-trees. This favorite spice was the great specialty of Ceylon's products in the days of the Portuguese and the Dutch, as well as before and since their occupancy.

Ratnapura — the "City of Gems" — is situated about fifty miles southeast of Colombo and twelve or fifteen miles from Adam's Peak, on the banks of the Kaluganga, a hundred and fifty feet above sea level. There is an official residence here, a small Episcopal chapel, a Roman Catholic chapel, a jail, and a hospital. A rocky hillock is surmounted by a small fort, within whose walls is a meteorological observatory. An ancient mosque also testifies to the fact that Islamism is no new profession here. Lofty hills tower all about, radiating from Adam's Peak. A couple of miles west of Ratnapura is one of the richest Buddhist temples in Ceylon; by rich, we mean most liberally endowed. It has no architectural interest or beauty, but is quite like a score of others met elsewhere inland.

About four or five years since, as the story is told, a ruby weighing twenty-six carats was found at Ratnapura, which was valued in its uncut condition, by the London jewelers to whom it was sent, at twenty-five thousand dollars, and it is said that after it was cut it lost but little of its weight, while it gained immensely in brilliancy. This gem was sold to a royal

party for forty thousand dollars. Nearly all the high-cost jewels known to collectors of precious stones, save the diamond, emerald, and turquoise, come from the soil of this island. The true cat's-eye is a greenish, translucent quartz, which presents, when cut and polished, an internal reflection; hence the appropriate name which it bears. This gem is said to be found only in Ceylon, though of this we are not certain. One sees splendid native specimens here at Colombo, valued at three and four thousand dollars each. As we have intimated, the finest gems produced by Ceylon do not leave India. The Rajah of Jeypoor is said to have a cat's-eye of fabulous size and beauty, valued at a king's ransom, besides great wealth in other precious stones. Though this ruler is a cultured man, like most of his nationality he is inclined to be superstitious, and ascribes special protective virtues to his gems. It is somewhat remarkable that diamonds are not indigenous here, since the famous Golconda mines are so near at hand in southern India.

Occasional alexandrites, so called in honor of the Russian Czar, are found in the island. Their color by daylight is a dark green, bronze-like hue, but by artificial light the stone is a deep crimson, and is highly prized for its distinctive properties.

Nearly every year, some fresh locality on the plains or in the valleys is worked with profitable results by the gem seekers, but the rocky regions of the moun-

tains, whence these precious stones have been washed in the process of disintegration which has been going on for ages, have never been prospected. The vast richness which is hidden in those primitive rocks will one day, perhaps, be brought to light, rivaling the dazzling stories of the Arabian Nights, or the fascinating extravagances of Jules Verne.

The choicest uncut stones which are still to be seen in the walls of the Taj Mahal — that poem in marble at Agra, India, the tomb of the wife of Emperor Shah Jehan — are said to have come originally from Ratnapura. They were only crudely dressed by native skill for this purpose, but the intrinsic value is there all the same.

Besides precious stones, Ceylon produces gold, quicksilver, plumbago of the finest quality, and magnetic iron ore. Plumbago has at various times formed quite an item in the exports of the island. The supply of this article in the neighborhood of Ratnapura is practically inexhaustible. It is found in large, detached masses of fine quality, five or six feet below the surface of the ground. There is always a sure market for plumbago, and it seems singular that a more organized effort is not made to obtain it for export. The Colonial Blue Book shows that in 1840 there were only about one thousand hundredweight packages of plumbago or graphite exported from Ceylon. Each year since has seen a large increase of these figures, until in 1891 there were over four hun-

dred thousand hundredweight packages sent from the island, or say two hundred thousand tons. This aggregate, we are told, will soon be largely increased by adopting American and European machinery in mining the crude article. Some of these mines have reached a depth of six and seven hundred feet. Plumbago mining may not present the charm which attaches to the digging for rubies and sapphires, but in the long run the cash results are far more satisfactory. Even iron would pay better than gems, and it exists here in inexhaustible quantities, particularly in the western and central provinces, cropping out at the surface in great purity. The natives have for centuries been in the habit of smelting this ore, and of making it into such tools as they required. They are excellent imitators in metal as well as in wood. In the Colombo Museum there is a sample of the gun-barrels (really effective arms) which the natives were accustomed to make, with such primitive tools as they possessed, out of this home-smelted magnetic ore. The iron implements, which are successfully wrought into various forms by the rude process of the natives, are equal in temper to the very best Swedish work, showing that the raw metal must be of a superior sort.

Long ago, the Chinese exported from this island large quantities of kaolin (*terra alba*), for the manufacture of fine pottery, and it is an article which is still abundant and easily procured here.

A considerable number of Tamils and Moormen are employed by dealers in Colombo to examine the river-beds in mountain districts in search of precious stones, and there are also certain individuals ready to act as guides to those strangers disposed to try their luck in searching for sparkling stones. Many casual visitors to the island do this, and they are sometimes reasonably rewarded, but "big finds" do not often come to such parties. There is another famous place besides Ratnapura which produces gems. It is the flat country contiguous to Ballomgodde, fifteen miles southeast of the City of Gems. Nearly all the valleys of this region have been receptacles at one time or another of the gem-impregnated soil of the mountains, washed down by flooding rains and former rivers, whose courses have since been diverted to further the extended system of irrigation.

The valuable stones come into the dealers' hands in the rough state, and to an inexperienced eye appear to be of little value. They receive what may be called a preliminary cutting by natives who have acquired some degree of skill at this business, but they are not really marketable until they are recut by Europeans in London, Vienna, or Hamburg, in an artistic and scientific manner. Probably far the largest number of precious stones which are sold in Paris, or London, or in America, excepting those we have already named, come from this Indian island, but the reader may rely upon it that they can as a rule

be much more advantageously purchased elsewhere than in Colombo. Let no person, unless he be an expert, trust to his own judgment in purchases on the spot. The Moormen, in whose hands the trade almost entirely rests, are a set of confirmed knaves and adroit swindlers, whose cunning and dishonesty have become proverbial. If they cannot cheat a purchaser in any other way, they will slyly substitute a piece of worthless glass for a true stone at the last moment, after the bargain has been made, and then disappear.

We heard some exasperating stories of these transactions, which should put visitors on their guard. Almost every one who visits Ceylon, whether he lands in the north or the south, is a witness of, or a victim to, similar transactions.

For instance, you have been shown a really fine sapphire by a Moorman, for which a sum is demanded which seems exorbitant. You would like to possess the stone, and, after careful examination, offer forty pounds for what was priced to you at sixty. It was a fair offer on your part, and probably was very near its intrinsic value in the market. The Moorman declares that he will not take one penny less than his original price, and begs you to show it to your friends, and not to lose a good bargain. He brings the beautiful gem to you several times for further examination, at the same time watching your movements carefully. Finally, the moment comes for

you to embark on the outgoing steamer. He is watchful and intercepts you, once more offering the sapphire, while declaring that he is poor and cannot afford to keep it, but must let you have it for the forty pounds you offered; actual necessity compels him to sacrifice it at that price, etc., etc. You hastily pay over the money, and receive the gem, as you suppose, just as the boat pushes off from the shore, headed for the ship. The anchor is already being hoisted, and in a few moments you are under way. Curiosity causes you to take one more look at the coveted treasure before putting it safely away. You seek the cabin in order to get the effect of a strong artificial light upon the gem. Somehow it does not look quite so brilliant and rich in color as you expected. It must be the dampness of the ship which clouds the sapphire. You look more closely. Is it possible? Yes, you hold in your hand a piece of worthless glass, of the size and shape of the real gem which had won your admiration from the first. You do not know the name of the rascal who has so cunningly cheated you, and could prove nothing if it were possible to return to Colombo. It is of no use to sacrifice time and money in an attempt at recovery of your forty pounds. You have to swallow your indignation and pocket the loss. The author has thus given an extreme case, but it is a typical and a true one, the actual experience of a person who related the circumstances to him.

“These villainous Moormen all look alike,” said the victim, “and I very much doubt if I could identify the fellow if he were now standing before me.”

It is the same here in mining for precious stones as with gold-mining in Australia and other countries. The majority of persons who engage in the exciting occupation of gem hunting are irresponsible, and of ill-regulated habits.

An intelligent resident of Ratnapura told the author that the presence of these gems in the earth of Ceylon, so far from being of any real advantage to the inhabitants or to the true prosperity of the island, is a source of a vast amount of evil. “After a Singhalese has once embarked in gem digging,” he said, “he is good for nothing else; henceforth he becomes a genuine loafer, ignoring all legitimate occupation, while contracting most undesirable habits and associations. He is generally employed at miserable wages by the Moormen in Colombo, though he is paid a premium when he finds and turns over a really good stone. But the constant aim of these contracting parties is simply to defraud and cheat each other to the greatest possible extent.” The native who is thus engaged steals more stones than he accounts for, and coolly pockets his wages.

Diamond mining in Africa is not more demoralizing than gem digging in Ceylon. Men who have nothing to lose but everything to gain are the class engaged in such enterprises. Regular and legitimate

occupations are neglected by those who become thus absorbed. It is a sort of gambling, only in another and perhaps more fascinating form. Doubtless all the precious stones secured in Ceylon annually would not exceed one hundred thousand dollars at their true market value. Were this sum to be equally divided among the thousands of natives who thus occupy their time, it will be seen that a less exacting and laborious occupation, industriously pursued, would give surer and more satisfactory returns. There is always the delusive charm of uncertainty — of possibility — in gem seeking, fascinating to the average mind. Emerson tells us that “no gold-mining country is traversed by good roads, nor are there good schools on the shore where pearls are found!” As if in verification of this assertion, nothing can exceed the desolation of the shore in the neighborhood of the pearl-fishing banks near Aripo, on the west coast of Ceylon. During the brief period devoted to the fishery, temporary huts and tents are occupied by people immediately interested; but, the short season over, the place relapses into a state of desolation. Like all lotteries, there are more blanks than prizes connected with the pearl fisheries, and for one person who is made joyful by the profits which are realized, one hundred and more go away in utter disappointment.

A story is told of an occurrence at Aripo which happened not long since, and which had a fatal termination. A certain foreigner had come from a long

distance, and at great cost, to venture his all in a season's effort to secure rich and rare pearls. His inexperience was great, and his misfortunes were in proportion. The season closed, leaving him impoverished. His disappointment was too great for endurance, and the poor fellow in his despair sought a suicide's grave in the depths of the sea.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Circumnavigating the Island. — Batticaloa, Capital of the Eastern Province. — Rice Culture. — Fish Shooting. — Point Pedro. — Jaffna. — Northern Province. — Oriental Bazaars. — Milk ignored. — The Clear Sea and White, Sandy Bottom. — American Missionaries. — A Medical Bureau. — Self-Respect a Lost Virtue. — Snake Temples. — Ramisseram. — Adam's Bridge. — A Huge Hindu Temple. — Island of Manaar. — Aripo. — The Port of Negombo. — Tamil Coolies. — Homeward Bound. — A Farewell View.

No one on visiting Ceylon, who can possibly spare the necessary time, should fail to circumnavigate the island. Since 1889, a number of lighthouses have been erected from Colombo round the entire southern coast, adding a degree of security to navigation which was much needed. These beacon stars are so numerous as to be almost within sight of one another. That at Dondra Head stands one hundred and seventy feet above sea level. The vessels which make this circuit stop at each of the large ports to discharge and take on cargo, thus enabling the traveler to land and get a very good general idea of each place with its near surroundings. If the visitor desires to do so, he can remain at any of these places until the boat comes again in its regular course, when the journey may be resumed. It is well to stop at Point Pedro and at Jaffna in this way, as they are neighborhoods of more than ordinary interest, both present and his-

toric. We should advise a few days' delay also at Ramisseram, a part of the time being divided between this place and the large island of Manaar, which is quite accessible.

The pleasantest way to accomplish this circuit is to take the boat at Point de Galle, the first place at which it is desirable to land being Batticaloa, the capital of the eastern province. There is a bar at the mouth of this harbor which is a serious impediment to making an entrance into the little bay. When the sea breeze is strong, and during the south-east monsoon, a line of breakers is created upon the shoal, and no attempt is made to land. This is a great rice-raising region, which gets its artificial water supply from two extensive neighboring lakes or tanks. Twenty-five thousand acres of land may be seen hereabouts under rice cultivation, yielding two crops per annum. The Portuguese built a substantial stone fort at Batticaloa, which was afterwards added to and strengthened by the Dutch, and latterly still further improved by the English. There is plenty of wild game in this region, including the huge elephant, though this animal is more numerous in the central provinces and at the north. Here one has a chance, upon a still night, of hearing the vocal performance of the singing fishes, and also of witnessing the native sport of shooting fish. The Tamils go out in boats just off-shore, carrying lighted torches, the fire of which attracts the curiosity of the fishes, bringing them to the

surface, when the boatmen shoot them with bows and short arrows. To the latter a thin, light string is attached, by which the fishes are promptly secured. From here the packet boat goes north to Trincomalee, already described, thence to Point Pedro, the extreme northern part of Ceylon, — *Punta das Pedras*, the “rocky cape.” We have said that this is the extreme northern point of Ceylon, but let us qualify the remark. Though it is generally so considered, Point Palmyra, a promontory situated a few miles to the westward, is really still farther north. The humble Tamil women of this district are fine upright figures in their simple costume, which consists of a long fold of cotton cloth enveloping the body below the waist and thrown carelessly over the left shoulder, leaving the right arm and bust free. Women who from girlhood always carry burdens upon their heads never fail to have an upright and stately carriage. As before intimated, the Tamil women are far handsomer in features than the Singhalese race. The Jaffna peninsula has been peopled by the Tamil race for two thousand years or more.

Point Pedro is a small town, and the harbor does not deserve the name, being only an open roadstead sheltered by a coral reef, where a number of vessels of moderate size are nearly always to be seen. Its commerce is limited to the export of tobacco, coconut oil, and cabinet woods. The trade is almost entirely with continental India, from whence rice is

largely imported. Some cattle, sheep, and elephants are also shipped from here to southern India, the government realizing a royalty upon each of the last-named animals exported.

Jaffna is over two hundred miles from Colombo by land, and is peopled mostly by Tamils, who have a record connected with their settlement here reaching back for many centuries. The population of the entire peninsula is recorded as being about two hundred thousand, to meet whose spiritual wants there are said to be three hundred Hindu temples in this northern province. The peninsula presents one uniform level, and is unbroken by a single hill, scarcely varied, in fact, by an undulation of more than a very few feet. This dead level renders the country unfit for rice culture, as it prevents the advantageous flow of an artificial supply of water. By much labor this difficulty is partially overcome, and considerable rice is grown in various parts of the district, but much more is imported. The best sheep in Ceylon are raised in this part of the island; they have long hair in place of wool, and to the uninitiated seem more like goats than sheep.

The Dutch left the impress of their residence here in the characteristic style of the architecture, — low, substantial, broad-spread stone buildings, which still remain. These homes are detached, and surrounded by garden plots containing thrifty fruit trees and charming flowers, supplemented by graceful creeping

and flowering vines upon the dark gray old walls of the dwellings. The streets of the town are wide and regular, shaded by an abundance of handsome tulip-trees. There are at least forty thousand people living in and immediately around Jaffna. It has a certain oriental look, especially in the quarters where the native bazaars are situated, thronged by copper-colored men and women. This region is well wooded, the predominating tree being the palmyra palm.

The dry grains, such as millet and the like, are much cultivated in the north, while at the south the entire farming population seem to devote their energy to the raising of rice. The soil throughout the Jaffna peninsula is very light, requiring much careful culture in order to produce satisfactory results. It was long before the necessity of using fertilizers upon the soil was realized in this region, but when the plan was once adopted and its importance thus demonstrated, it was henceforth employed systematically. In the neighborhood of populous centres in the island, north and south, the natives milk their cows to supply a certain demand confined to Europeans mostly, but do not themselves use milk to any great extent. The calves have the benefit of this abstinence on the part of the farmers. It is the same in China, where the people at large never use milk. In this Jaffna district, goats' milk is made into excellent cheese.

All along the shore in this neighborhood the bot-

tom of the sea is formed of pure white sand, and is as level as a parlor floor, while the water is so clear that any object is distinctly seen below its surface. One may behold a sort of Neptune's Garden at many points, similar to, but not quite equaling, that described at Point de Galle. The eye is delighted by bright-hued anemones, as large as a cauliflower, together with strange fishes in vivid colors, extensive coral, star-fish in blue and scarlet, and busy, smoky-groves of green crabs in search of their marine food. Such spots form a sort of museum, only Nature does these things with a royal hand, and not in a penny-wise, showman fashion.

A repulsive-looking creature which is made a source of profit abounds on this shore, — a flat slug, five or six inches long. Next to the edible bird's nests, it is considered to be one of the greatest luxuries in their country. They are found below the surface of the water, at a depth varying from one to five fathoms, and the collection of them forms a considerable occupation on the northwest coast. The natives do not appreciate these slugs. They are cured and exported solely by a small colony of Chinese, who have settled in this neighborhood for the purpose, and who find ample support in the occupation.

Jaffna is a great centre of American missionary work, and is also the see of a Roman Catholic bishop. The American mission was begun here as early as 1816, and has gone onward ever since, increasing in

its schools, chapels, and the number of instructors. An excellent work consummated here, in connection with the American mission, is the establishment of a Medical Bureau. The mission has long needed such an aid in its own behalf, and its services are also freely extended to the native population. Such practical benefit as must accrue to the people at large will do more to abolish "devil-dancing" and other absurdities, intended to exorcise evil spirits from the bodies of invalids, than any amount of reasoning with the poor, ignorant creatures. Within the old fort is the ancient Dutch Presbyterian church, and facing the esplanade are the Anglican and Wesleyan churches.

One sees comparatively few Singhalese proper in this region, or in fact anywhere north of the central province. The habits of the common people of the Jaffna peninsula are represented to be of a highly objectionable character, which does not argue well for the long-established missionaries who have such sway here. Self-respect is said to be a forgotten virtue with both sexes of the Tamil race, as well as with the other mixed nationalities. These people seem to be born with strange proclivities in their blood, and there is certainly very little improvement to be observed in their condition as regards the influence of Christianity upon their daily lives.

In olden times, as already intimated, Ceylon was known in the East by the name of Naga-dwipa, — "Snake Isle," — and it would seem not without good

reason, for until quite lately there was a snake-temple on the island of Naiwativoe, which lies just off the shore, west of Jaffna, where many serpents were nourished and cared for, including a number of deadly cobras, by an organized corps of priests. There is, or was very lately, a cobra-temple upon what is known as the Twin Isle, twenty miles further south, and eastward of Ramisseram. It is therefore plain enough that there were once plenty of serpent-worshipping tribes in various parts of Ceylon.

We know that the worship of the snake is a very ancient creed. Mexicans, Egyptians, Hindus, Babylonians, and Buddhists have been devotees to this idea. All stories or legends of the creation contain some reference to the serpent, which also, according to Biblical lore, played its part in the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden.

We have failed to mention heretofore that the remains of certain Druidical circles of stone are occasionally found in both the northern and southern portions of Ceylon, indicating that the Druidical form of worship, which is supposed to be that of the Phœnicians, must have once prevailed upon this island. These tokens belong to a period a thousand years prior to the founding of the "buried cities" which we have described.

On leaving Jaffna, the coasting steamer steers southward through the Gulf of Manaar, following the Paumben Channel, past Adam's Bridge. A call is

made at the "holy" island of Ramisseram, where a visit may be made to the great Hindu temple situated on the east end of the island. Ramisseram is fourteen miles long by about five in width. The dimensions of the temple upon the ground are eight hundred and sixty-eight feet by six hundred and seventy-two in width, far exceeding any other shrine or building in the island of Ceylon. Like the temples of Tanjore, Madura, and Trichinopoly in continental India, it is massive and tawdry, but still is the annual resort of hosts of devout pilgrims from vast distances, who have impoverished themselves, probably, to perform this pilgrimage. They expect by such an exhibition of reverence to be freed from all sin with the punishment it entails, and to fully merit Paradise. The ceiling of the great temple consists of vast masses of granite slabs supported by carved stone pillars twelve feet high, each of which is a monolith. This Hindu temple of Ramisseram is unique; as to its age, it is between four and five hundred years old. The fables one hears relating to this shrine are legion, all thoroughly tinctured with gross absurdities; still, the place is well worth a visit, and careful study.

The island of Manaar, close at hand, off the west coast, and from which Adam's Bridge extends towards the continent of India, is eighteen miles long, and but three or four wide. There is nothing here to invite a visit from the casual traveler. The

soil is sandy and poorly adapted to agriculture. It has, however, large groves of cocoanut and palmyra palms, with very good pasturage. Goats and cattle are bred here to a considerable extent, and a peculiar hard cheese is an article of export. The island is a hundred and forty miles by water from Colombo. There is a fort at the town of Manaar, situated on the southeastern extremity of the island. The harbor is too shallow to admit vessels drawing over eight or ten feet of water, but is completely sheltered. There are some twenty villages on this comparatively barren slip of land, but the people seem to be thrifty and healthy. There is no malaria here. It is a Roman Catholic centre, and most of the people are of that faith.

Again taking the steam-packet, we proceed southward by Aripo, the famous pearl-fishing grounds of the Gulf of Manaar, about one hundred and fifty miles from the capital. If we pass near enough to the west coast of the island to observe the shore in this vicinity, it will be found that nothing can exceed the desolation which it presents. It is barren, low, and sandy, with here and there a scrubby jungle and an occasional reach of stunted herbage. It is difficult to realize that such a locality can be the source of wealth of any sort, and particularly that it is the natal place of that loveliest and purest of gems, the oriental pearl.

Still sailing southward, we find ourselves in due

time opposite Negombo, seven or eight leagues north of Colombo. This little seaport is the outlet to a fine agricultural country, where cattle and garden products are raised for the support of the capital, with which it has an inland water connection. This place is famous for its fruit gardens, — exotic fruits, originally introduced from Java and the Malacca peninsula. It is one of the most rural spots in the island, famous for its cinnamon estates. The traveler's attention is sure to be called to a noble specimen of the banian-tree at this attractive seaside place, and also to an old and most curious, many-headed cocoanut-tree. The town has a fine esplanade bordering the sea, and a very comfortable rest-house for the stranger. After passing the Bight of Negombo, we soon enter the harbor of Colombo, and as we do so, an English mail steam packet is passed whose decks are crowded with coolies bound for Tuticorin, a port two hundred miles away, across the Gulf of Manaar. The planters of Ceylon import these dusky laborers from southern India at harvest time, when the tea and coffee fields yield their annual product. The poor creatures are very glad to earn a small sum of money in this service, wherewith to eke out their necessary home expenses. When the Ceylon harvest is over, they return to their humble homes in this manner, the planters paying for their transportation both ways.

From our standpoint on the bridge of the coasting

steamer, we overlook the forward deck of the mail packet, where the homeward bound coolies form strangely picturesque groups in their rags and nakedness, mingled with occasional bits of highly colored clothing. A white turban, a red fez, a bandana kerchief bound about a woman's head, whose infant is lashed to her back in sleepy unconsciousness, all combine to produce a striking kaleidoscopic effect.

A southwest monsoon is coming on, and there will presently be a fierce downpour of rain. The coolies will have but one night to pass on the troubled sea, but it will be for them a wretched one, — seasick, ill-fed, and poorly sheltered creatures. Their small annual pittance is insignificant compensation for what they have to perform and what they endure. There are two or three hundred of them, herded like cattle ; there is no cabin, — deck passage is all that is paid for ; and such is considered quite good enough accommodations for these very humble Tamils. There is said to be compensation in the life of every living being, but it is difficult to point out wherein the principle applies to these low caste Indians.

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Before leaving Colombo, an earnest desire possessed the author to see the town from the bay, under the charm imparted by an equatorial moon and starlight. A couple of native oarsmen and a comfortable boat afforded the means of gratifying this wish, all the stronger from the fresh memory of a like experience,

not long ago, off the historic island of Malta. The view of Colombo, it must be acknowledged, was a disappointment. It is too thickly embowered with palms to form a pleasing picture of itself: but ah, the tropical night, luxurious and calm, with its wonderful brilliancy above, and its dark, mysterious shadows below! The molten silver on which we idly floated had just ripple sufficient to double its reflective power, lit by an occasional flash of phosphorescence when the oars were dipped. The hoarse murmur of the outside sea beating against the stout breakwater; the head and stern lights of the shipping at anchor, distributed here and there; the flashing eye of fire from the lighthouse, casting its long golden wake seaward; the dancing lamps on the low-lying shore of the Singhalese capital, with the soft strains of music from an English bungalow in the half-moon bend of the beach, — all together formed a delightful picture, leaving a typical scene deeply engraved on the memory.

Land, sea, and star-illuminated sky, everything charmingly bright with the tender kiss of moonlight, how absolutely perfect was our farewell vision of this “utmost” Indian isle.





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